

JLA ★ AVENGERS

COLLECTOR'S EDITION



BUSIEK ★ PÉREZ





EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES THE AVENGERS



And there came a day unlike any other, when Earth's mightiest heroes were united against a common threat! On that day the Avengers were born—to fight the foes no single hero could withstand!



COPYRIGHT © 2004 DC COMICS AND MARVEL CHARACTERS INC. PRINTED IN CHINA.

JLA
THE AVENGERS
THE COLLECTOR'S EDITION

BUSIEK ★ PÉREZ

DC COMICS
MARVEL COMICS

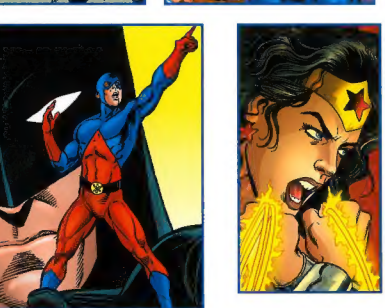
JLA ★ AVENGERS COLLECTOR'S EDITION



BUSIEK ★ PÉREZ



THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES! JLA



The Justice League of America is Earth's first and last line of defense, a pantheon of super-powered protectors watching over the Earth from a fortress on the Moon.







JLA★AVENGERS BUSIEK★PÉREZ

WRITER **HURT BUSIEH**
ARTIST **GEORGE PÉREZ**

COLORIST **TOM SMITH**
LETTERER **RICHARD STARKINGS**



Tom Brevoort • Mike Carlin • Dan Raspler *EDITORS-ORIGINAL SERIES*
Stephen Wacker *ASSOCIATE EDITOR-ORIGINAL SERIES*
Andy Schmidt • Marc Sumerak *ASSISTANT EDITORS-ORIGINAL SERIES*



DC COMICS

Robert Greenberger *SENIOR EDITOR-COLLECTED EDITION*
Amie Brockway-Metcalf *ART DIRECTOR*
Dan DiDio *VP-EDITORIAL*
Paul Levitz *PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER*
Georg Brewer *VP-DESIGN & RETAIL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT*
Richard Bruning *SR. VP-CREATIVE DIRECTOR*
Patrick Caldon *SR. VP-FINANCE & OPERATIONS*
Chris Caramalis *VP-FINANCE*
Terri Cunningham *VP-MANAGING EDITOR*
Alison Gill *VP-MANUFACTURING*
Rich Johnson *VP-BOOK TRADE SALES*
Hank Kanalz *VP-GENERAL MANAGER, WILDSTORM*
Lillian Laserson *SR. VP & GENERAL COUNSEL*
Jim Lee *EDITORIAL DIRECTOR-WILDSTORM*
David McKillips *VP-ADVERTISING & CUSTOM PUBLISHING*
John Nee *VP-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT*
Gregory Noveck *SR. VP-CREATIVE AFFAIRS*
Cheryl Rubin *VP-BRAND MANAGEMENT*
Bob Wayne *VP-SALES & MARKETING*



MARVEL ENTERPRISES, INC.

Allen Lipson *CEO & GENERAL COUNSEL*
Avi Arad *CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER*
Alan Fine *PRESIDENT CEO, TOY BIZ*
Gui Karyo *PRESIDENT OF PUBLISHING & CIO*
Ken West *CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER*
Ralph Lancelotti *E.V.P. SALES, TOY BIZ*
Mary Sprowls *V.P., HUMAN RESOURCES*

PUBLISHING GROUP
Dan Buckley *PUBLISHER*
Joe Quesada *EDITOR IN CHIEF*
David Bogart *MANAGING EDITOR*
Dan Carr *PRODUCTION DIRECTOR*
Christine Slusarz *MANUFACTURING MANAGER*
Stefano Perrone, Jr. *MANUFACTURING REPRESENTATIVE*

ADVERTISING-PROMOTION-RETAIL SALES
Russell A. Brown *EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/CONSUMER PRODUCTS, PROMOTIONS & MEDIA SALES*
Sara Beth Schrage *ADVERTISING SALES*

JLA/AVENGERS: THE COLLECTORS' EDITION

Published by DC Comics. Cover, introduction, and compilation copyright © 2004 DC Comics and Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Originally published in single magazine form in JLA/AVENGERS 1-4. Copyright © 2003, 2004 DC Comics and Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Justice League of America and all related characters, their distinctive likenesses and related elements featured in this publication are trademarks of DC Comics. The Avengers and all related characters, their distinctive likenesses and related elements featured in this publication are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. The stories characters, and incidents featured in this publication are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories, or artwork. DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. A Warner Bros. Entertainment Company. Printed in China. First Printing. ISBN: 1-4012-0207-1

Cover illustration by **George Pérez** • Cover color by **Tom Smith**

INTRODUCTIONS

BY STAN LEE

Wouldja believe you're reading these wondrous words because of an amazing event that happened more than forty years ago!

(That introductory sentence is known as a literary "hook." It's supposed to grab your interest and make you eager to find out what I'm referring to. See how much you learn by reading comics?)

Now that you're breathlessly waiting to find out what this has to do with the JLA/Avengers match-up, I'll keep you in suspense no longer.

Four decades ago the publisher of Marvel (which was then called Atlas Comics) was playing golf with the publisher of DC (which was then called National Comics). Actually, those names have nothing to do with this story, but hey, I get paid by the word. Anyhow, don't go away — it'll get even more confusing.

The DC bigwig, named Jack Liebowitz, told the Marvel mugwump, named Martin Goodman, that his new magazine *Justice League of America*, which featured a whole kaboodle of heroes, was selling like there's no tomorrow.

Well, mighty Marty didn't need a house to fall on him. As soon as the golf game was over he raced to a phone and called yours truly.

"Stan," he bellowed, "National's *Justice League* is a hot seller. I want us to get on the bandwagon, too. Cook me up a book which stars a whole team of heroes — and do it yesterday!"

So now you know comicdom's worst-kept secret — the reason I dreamed up the good ol' *Fantastic Four*, which I modestly called "The World's Greatest Comic."

Aided by the artwork of the titanicly talented Jack Kirby, the FF, as I lovingly called it, became our best-selling title in almost no time flat. After that, we were in a no-holds-barred, neck-and-neck race with the JLA. Meanwhile, another amazing thing happened.

Working at fever pitch, we created a brand-new batch of additional super-heroes that may not be unfamiliar to you, like *Spider-Man*, *The X-Men*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Daredevil*, *Iron Man*, *The Mighty Thor*, *Dr. Strange* — well, you get the idea. Now, the amazing thing about them was — we had them all living in the same universe; in fact, most of them hung in the same city — the Big Apple.

I can picture your clever little mind racing ahead of me as you mumble to yourself, "Ah, I know what he's getting at. Since Marvel had all those heroes living in the same place, Stan must've gotten the idea to have them all get together and form a fighting team. That must be how *The Avengers* was born!"

See? I told you reading comics makes you smart. Look how easily you figured that out.

But now we come to the really heavy part.

Just for fun, let's pretend you're a writer. (If you really are a writer, you don't have to bother pretending. Just skip on to the next paragraph.)

BY JULIUS SCHWARTZ

AS TOLD TO ROBERT GREENBERGER

The revivals of super-heroes were going so well that my schedule was getting crowded. But when we came up with the next logical step, combining these heroes into a team, no one else would touch it but me! Obviously, we modeled the new team after the Justice Society of America, but as I've said for years, I've never liked the name Society. It sounded too upscale. I preferred something like League, since, after all, everyone followed the baseball leagues.

Every super-hero who had a feature was going to be in the new team, so I was suddenly working with characters I barely knew, like Aquaman and the Martian Manhunter. People have often wondered how Green Arrow got left off the roster. To tell you the truth, I really can't remember, but chances are Aquaman made the cut because we were already planning to try him out in *SHOWCASE* and the team was big enough. After all, I only had 24 pages to tell a story!

There was little doubt that Gardner Fox, who wrote the majority of the old JSA stories, was going to be my man. We hammered out a plot, and he delivered in the early fall of 1959. We created many memorable opponents early on, mixing up the aliens Gardner liked (Kanjor Ro, Despero) with the costumed villains I liked (Dr. Destiny, Felix Faust). The resulting mix seemed to work just fine for the readers.

Mike Sekowsky, the only artist I worked with who could uniquely fit all these characters on each page, pencilled the job in a mere two weeks. I knew a good thing when I saw one and I kept them together, producing 66 complete stories over the next eight years.

The mail told me we had a hit before the sales figures followed to confirm the news. In fact, I was already working on *JUSTICE LEAGUE* #1 in the spring of 1960 before the first sales numbers arrived. Longtime fans happily made the comparison with the old JSA, and people were already suggesting new members. Well, we relented and finally let Green Arrow in. I was then sticking to my guns, and waited for heroes to have their own title before they could join, like the Atom and Hawkman.

After Gardner Fox and I introduced the parallel world of Earth-2 in *THE FLASH*, it was only a matter of time before the JLA would meet the JSA. Of course, no

Suppose you were given the job of writing scripts for *The Avengers*. There are two ways to look at it...

1) You'd figure "Boy, what an easy assignment. I have all those heroes with all those great super powers to write about. It'll be a snap to make every page and every panel exciting."

2) You'd figure "How did I get conned into this? How can I crowd all these characters into one 32-page comic-book? It'll be much tougher than just writing about one super-hero!"

Actually, I agree with both choices, but I prefer #1. It's a real blast to write a story with lots of heroes and heroines. It gives you a chance to explore every phase of the human condition — jealousy, bravery, hatred, friendship, cowardice — you begin to feel like you're writing *War and Peace*!

Also, it's like sending your brain to the gym for exercise, because you've gotta get the gray matter working overtime to dream up villains and menaces that are dangerous and deadly enough to be a threat to the most powerful super-heroes in the universe.

Sure, it may not be easy, but man, it's so rewarding! Just imagine having some of the greatest super-hero characters of all time to play with in one story. Visualize some of the thoughts that go through the writer's head:

"Which of the heroes should I feature? Should I use them all or just a few of them? Do I dream up one super-powerful villain like Galactus, or do I match my super-hero team against an equally powerful team, or maybe one that's even more powerful? How do I keep the reader from being bored if all the characters get along nice and peacefully? How can I develop friction and hard feelings between some of the heroes and heroines?"

Then there's the most crucial question of all: "What kind of story can I invent and what kind of villain can I create that the reader hasn't seen a million times before? How can I come up with something really new and different?"

And you thought comic-book writers just sit around signing autographs and collecting their paychecks, huh?

But I cannot come to the end of this candid little confessional without saying a few words about my co-Introduction writer, Julius Schwartz. I'm both pleased and honored to have the opportunity to appear with this legendary comic-book great in a watershed collection such as this. In all the years that I've known and admired him, we've never actually worked together or appeared in the same magazine before. It's taken half a century for this to happen. But y'know something? Considering the respect and admiration I have for the countless accomplishments of Julie Schwartz, it was well worth the wait.

And now, true believers, much as I've enjoyed our little visit, it isn't fair to keep you waiting any longer. There are countless thrills and chills on the action-packed pages ahead, and it's time for you to tackle them. In fact, to be brutally honest, I'm not worried about you missing the excitement; it's just that I can't wait to get in on the fun!

So, as Green Lantern searches for a new set of batteries and Captain America takes his shield to be Simonized, I find myself too choked up with emotion to say any more, except for my soul-stirring exit line...

Excelsior! ★

one expected that to become an annual tradition for 20 years! After the sales figures came in on the first team-up, there was no question we'd do another and another. But the world's greatest super-heroes needed new and interesting threats, and Gardner always rose to the occasion.

But I never imagined they would ever cross paths with the Avengers. When DC and Marvel first tried to have the teams meet, I was just an innocent bystander, curious to see what would happen. After all, as Stan just said on the previous page, there wouldn't be an Avengers if I didn't first edit a Justice League!

But as the house ad said when we first gave the JLA their own title, Just Imagine!

Just imagine seeing the best and the brightest from two entirely different companies combating one another and then working together. It may seem like a tired old plot, but in the hands of true professionals they make it entertaining. Kurt and George have my admiration for taking the time and care to fit in so many heroes, villains and other familiar beings. I'm just glad I'm not the one who has to proofread it all! ★



JLA

WHO'S WHO

The Justice League of America is Earth's first and last line of defense, a pantheon of super-powered protectors watching over the Earth from a fortress on the Moon. Their membership at the time of this story includes but is not limited to the following heroes:

SUPERMAN

The last son of the doomed planet Krypton, Kal-El uses his incredible powers of flight, super-strength, and invulnerability to fight for truth and justice on his adopted planet, Earth. When not protecting the planet, he is *Daily Planet* reporter Clark Kent, married to fellow journalist Lois Lane.

BATMAN

Dedicated to ridding the world of crime since the brutal murder of his parents, billionaire Bruce Wayne dons the cape and cowl of the Dark Knight to battle evil from the shadows of Gotham City.

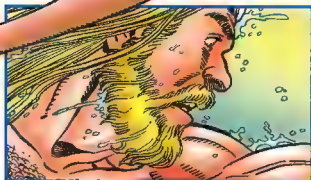
WONDER WOMAN

Born an Amazonian princess, Diana was chosen to serve as her people's ambassador of peace in the World of Man. Armed with the Lasso of Truth and indestructible bracelets, she directs her gods-given abilities of strength and speed toward the betterment of mankind.

THE FLASH

A member of the Teen Titans when he was known as Kid Flash, Wally West now takes the place of the fallen Flash, Barry Allen, as the speedster of the Justice League.





GREEN LANTERN

After the destruction of the Green Lantern Corps, Kyle Rayner was chosen to be the one true Green Lantern. The powers of his ring are limited only by the imagination of its bearer — a strong suit of Kyle, who toils by day as a commercial artist.

MARTIAN MANHUNTER

The most dedicated member of the Justice League, J'onn J'onzz has been present for every one of the team's many incarnations. His strength rivals that of Earth's mightiest heroes, and his shape-shifting abilities allow him to pass anonymously among our planet's populace.

PLASTIC MAN

The League's most versatile and creative member, the shape-changing Plastic Man serves in the JLA with a dedication and fortitude that is in sharp contrast to his playful and easygoing demeanor.

AQUAMAN

A founding member of the Justice League, Arthur is the royal ruler of a kingdom that covers over two-thirds of the Earth's surface. His abilities to withstand the awesome pressure of the deep and to communicate with all the ocean's inhabitants help to make him the undersea world's greatest protector.

THE ATOM

Ray Palmer is a scientist who harnessed the properties of a white dwarf star. This led to the creation of unique size and weight controls that enable him to reduce his physical form to that of an atom, or even smaller. Forgoing the typical world of heroics for research and teaching, the Atom remains a reserve member.

THE AVENGERS

WHO'S WHO

And there came a day unlike any other, when Earth's mightiest heroes were united against a common threat! On that day the Avengers were born — to fight the foes no single hero could withstand! Their membership at the time of this story includes but is not limited to the following heroes:

CAPTAIN AMERICA

In the dark days of World War Two, sickly Steve Rogers was chosen as the subject of an experiment to create the perfect soldier — Captain America! Frozen in suspended animation and reawakened in modern times, Cap continues to take up his indestructible shield in the cause of liberty and justice!

IRON MAN

His heart crippled in a terrorist attack, millionaire industrialist and genius inventor Tony Stark was forced to create an armored chestplate to keep himself alive. Incorporating it into the most sophisticated suit of high-tech armor the world has ever seen, Stark became Iron Man, the golden avenger, who uses his technological prowess to protect the world!

THOR

The son of Odin, lord of the Norse Gods of mythology, and the scion of fabled Asgard, the immortal Thor is the master of the storm, the God of Thunder, wielder of the irresistible mystic hammer Mjolnir!





WASP

To avenge the death of her father, socialite Janet Van Dyne underwent a process that allowed her to shrink to the size of an insect and sprout wings from her shoulders. Endowed with biological blasters known as her "wasp's sting," the Wasp has served the cause of justice ever since!

YELLOW JACKET

The master of many sizes, biochemist Henry Pym discovered the secret of shrinking and enlarging human tissue. Also gifted with the ability to converse with insects, Pym used these size-changing powers to become one of Earth's Mightiest Heroes, under a bevy of names and identities!

QUICKSILVER

A mutant born with the ability to move at unsurpassed speeds, Pietro Maximoff used his talents first as a member of the notorious Brotherhood of Evil Mutants but eventually reformed to become one of the most stalwart of the Avengers!

VISION

An android originally created to destroy the Avengers, the Vision asserted his independence and instead joined the team, where his ability to alter his density from ethereal to diamond-hard has been a constant asset to the group!

SCARLET WITCH

Born in the shadow of the mystic mountain Wundagore, Wanda Maximoff's mutant ability to harness chaos-magic for a variety of effects has availed her well as the most unpredictable of the Avengers!

HAWKEYE

Hawkeye is the world's greatest marksman — as he'll be the first to tell you! Originally a carnival performer and grifter, he now walks the path of the hero, striving to provide for others the opportunity for redemption he found alongside the Avengers!







PROLOGUE: THE WORLD
IS POLEMACHUS.

IT IS A WORLD THAT HAS KNOWN MUCH
WAR--THAT HAS REVELED IN COMBAT
AND BLOODSHED--

BUT TODAY--

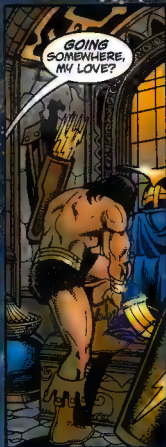


TODAY ITS PROUD
CAPITAL CITY KNOWS
ONLY JOY AND
CELEBRATION. FOR
TODAY IS A GREAT
DAY--

--THE DAY
OF THE
IMPERION.



GOING
SOMEWHERE,
MY LOVE?



I THOUGHT I'D GRAB A WINESKIN,
SOME MEAT AND CHEESE FROM THE
COOKROOM, AND GO KHEF-HUNTING
IN THE HILLS TODAY.

YOU'RE
WELCOME TO
JOIN ME, OF
COURSE.



UNLESS YOU'VE
GOT A BETTER
IDEA?



MMM.
MAYBE
LATER.



BUT TELL ME--WERE YOU PLANNING
THIS MANLY JAUNT FOR BEFORE
OR AFTER YOUR SUBJECTS HONOR
YOUR ASCENSION TO THE
IMPERIAL THRONE?

3SIGH I
SUPPOSE IT WOULDN'T
BE RIGHT TO AVOID IT
ENTIRELY. BUT ALL THOSE
ENDLESS SPEECHES PUT
ME STRAIGHT TO--



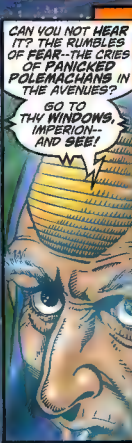
MILORD ARKON!
LADY THUNDRA!
WE ARE
ASSAILED!



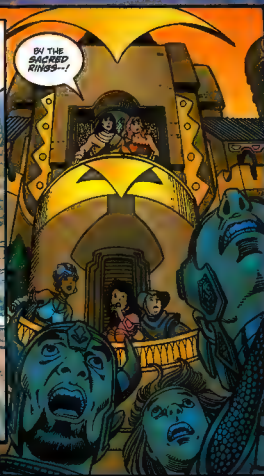
EH?
VIZIER,
WHAT--?

CAN YOU NOT HEAR
IT? THE RUMBLES
OF FEAR--THE CRIES
OF PANICKED
POLEMACHANS IN
THE AVENUES?

GO TO
THY WINDOWS,
IMPERION--
AND SEE!



BY THE
SACRED
RINGS--!!





IT IS NOT THE SIZE OF THAT WHICH FILLS THE SKY THAT MAKES IT SO UNNERVING.

IT IS THE GAZE--AN INTELLIGENT, QUESTING, HUNGRY GAZE THAT LANCES THROUGH EACH BEING BELOW.

IT FILLS THEIR HEADS, THEIR MINDS-- QUESTIONING, DEMANDING--



WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE SECRET? WHAT IS THE TRUTH? TELL ME! TELL ME!

SHHHH!

SHHKE



AND WHEN IT DOES NOT RECEIVE AN ANSWER, IT SEEKS--



--AND IN ITS WAKE COMES DEATH.



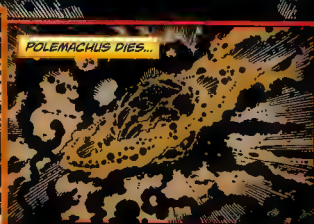
NO!

NO!



STAND CREATURE!

STAND AND FIGHT! ARKON THE MPERION



POLEMACHUS DIES...



--AND A UNIVERSE DIES WITH IT.

ANOTHER UNIVERSE,
OCCUPYING THE SAME
SPACE, BUT A DIFFERENT
VIBRATORY PLANE OF REALITY.

THE WORLD IS QWARD.

IT IS A WORLD THAT HAS
KNOWN MUCH WAR AS WELL.

IT KNOWS IT TODAY.

HOLD THEM
BACK, WEAPONERS!
HOLD THEM
BACK!

GODS
OF CARNAGE, WE
COMMAND THE MOST
DEVASTATING ARSENAL
IN ALL CREATION! SURELY
WE CAN DRIVE OFF
FIVE MERE--





AT LEAST
THESE GUYS CAN
PUT UP A FIGHT,
EH?

MAYBE
WE SHOULD LEAVE
JUST ENOUGH TO REBUILD,
SO WE CAN COME
BACK AND--

TELL
ME.

EH? DID
YOU SAY
SOMETHING,
QUI--

OH... OH...

WHAT
IS THE
SECRET?
WHAT IS THE
TRUTH?

THEY WERE THE CRIME SYNDICATE.
RULERS OF THIS REALITY'S EARTH.

GGH...

BY THE
UNHOLY!!

GET--OUT OF MY
HEAD, CREATURE.
GET OUT OF MY HEAD--
AND THEN I'LL SHOW YOU
WHAT PAIN REALLY IS.

VILLAINS.

CONQUERORS.

MONSTERS.

BUT NOW THEY, AND THE GUARDIANS,
THE WORLD THEY STAND ON AND THE
UNIVERSE IT FLOATS IN--

-- ARE NO MORE.

PROLOGUE ENDS.

DC COMICS & MARVEL COMICS PROUDLY PRESENT :



Once Upon a Time...



...there was a
Universe.

BOOK ONE

A JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY

4TH WITHIN
THAT
UNIVERSE...

...A YOUNG
GALAXY SPINS,
A MERE FIVE
MILLION LIGHT-
YEARS FROM
THE EDGE OF
EXPANSION.

AND IT IS
OBSERVED.

HE IS EN DWI
GAST, THE
GRANDMASTER.

HE IS AN
ELDER OF THE
UNIVERSE, ONE
OF THE OLDEST
BEINGS IN THE
COSMOS.

HIS POWER
INCALCULABLE,
HE HAS SPENT
MUCH OF HIS
EONS-LONG
LIFE IN SEARCH
OF DIVERSION--
IN COSMIC GAMES
OF CHANCE AND
SKILL, AND IN
WAGERS ON THE
OUTCOME OF
THOSE GAMES.

JUST UNDER A
BILLION YEARS
AGO, HE MADE
A BET WITH
ONE OF HIS
BRETHREN ON
THE PREDICTED
FINAL AXIAL
DECLINATION
OF THE OUTER-
MOST PLANET
OF A STAR
SYSTEM THAT
WOULD FORM
NEAR THE HUB
OF THIS GALAXY.

TODAY, THAT PLANET
WILL BE FORMED
ENOUGH--FOR THE
BET TO BE WON, OR
LOST.

ANOTHER
TWENTY
SECONDS.

ANOTHER
TEN
SECONDS.

TELL
ME!

THE WORDS ARE NOT
WORDS. HIS SENSES
ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH,
HIS MIND KEEN ENOUGH,
TO SENSE IT.

IT IS A PROBE -- A
BROAD-SPECTRUM
ENERGY PROBE THAT
SPREADS THROUGH
THE UNIVERSE, IN A
QUEST FOR ANSWERS,
FOR INFORMATION.

FOR
TRUTH.

NO
FURTHER,
INTRUDER.

YOUR PROBE
THREATENS THE
VERY FABRIC OF THE
UNIVERSE. I WILL NOT
PERMIT IT FURTHER
ACCESS.

WHO
ARE YOU...
AND WHAT
DO YOU
SEEK?

THE PROBE DRAWS BACK A
MOMENT--PERPLEXED, PERHAPS,
AT THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING
EVEN MOMENTARILY DENIED?

IT PAUSES.
SHIFTS. AND...

WHAT DO I
SEEK?

I SEEK
THE ULTIMATE
TRUTH.
WHO AM I?

I AM
KRONA.

AND I
WILL NOT BE
DENIED.

ONE MONTH LATER.

ANOTHER UNIVERSE.

SUPERMAN!

UHHH!

SUPERMAN!!
BE OKAY, GREEN
LANTERN--DON'T
WORRY ABOUT HIM!
JUST GET THOSE
PEOPLE OUT OF
THE PATH OF
DESTRUCTION.
GO GO GO GO
GO!

THE CREATURE
APPEARED WITHOUT
WARNING, NEAR
FALLVILLE, IOWA.

IT PAUSED, SEEMED TO
SCENT THE AIR, AND BEGAN
MARCHING DIRECTLY TOWARD
METROPOLIS, DESTROYING
EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.

IT'S REACHED THE
OUTSKIRTS OF
KEYSTONE CITY.

SHHH!
CAN'T--!

IT'S NOT STOPPING.
WE'RE BARELY EVEN
SLOWING IT DOWN!
WE'LL LOSE THIS
SHOPPING CENTER
IN MINUTES--

--AND THE
WEST KEYSTONE
MEDICAL CENTER
IS NEXT!

A DEPRESSING
SUMMATION,
AQUAMAN--BUT
ACCURATE.

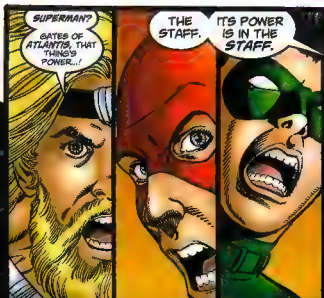
THIS BEING'S
MENTAL SHIELDS
ARE PRODIGIOUS--
I CAN SENSE A
MIND WITHIN, BUT
I CANNOT READ
IT--!

HEY, BAT--
WHAT'S THE
STORY?

YOU WANT A
LAWN CHAIR?
CAN OF SODA?
WEENIES, FOR
A ROAST?

HOW 'BOUT
SOME ACTION
HERE?!

QUIET,
"PLASTIC"
MAN...





...KEEP IT OCCUPIED!

AQUAMAN, ASSAULT FROM THE LEFT!



FLASH—
FROM THE
RIGHT.

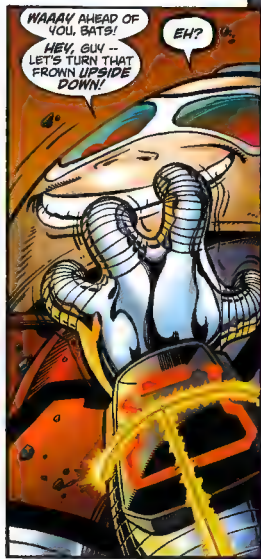
NO
PROBLEM.

HOW'S ABOUT
A COUPLE DOZEN
TONS OF CONCRETE
AND ROCK, ALL IN ITS
FACE AT 600
M.P.H.?



IT'S A
START.
PLASTIC
MAN...

IT'S A
START—
GEEZ—!



WAAAY AHEAD OF
YOU, BATS!
HEY, GUY --
LET'S TURN THAT
FROWN UPSIDE
DOWN!

EH?



WONDER
WOMAN,
RESTRAIN
HIM...

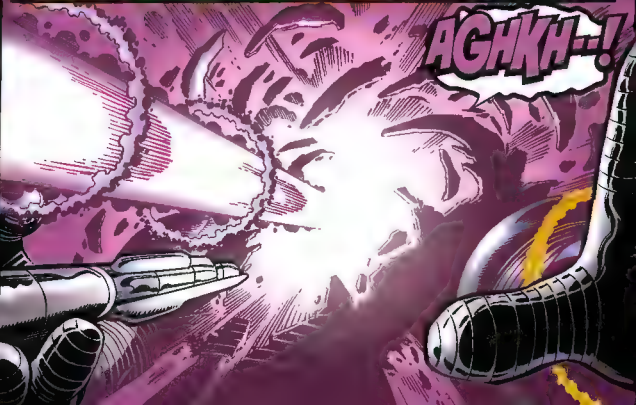
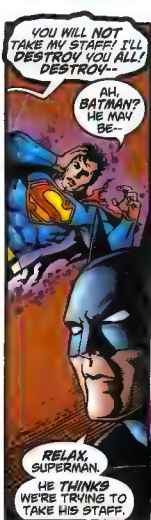
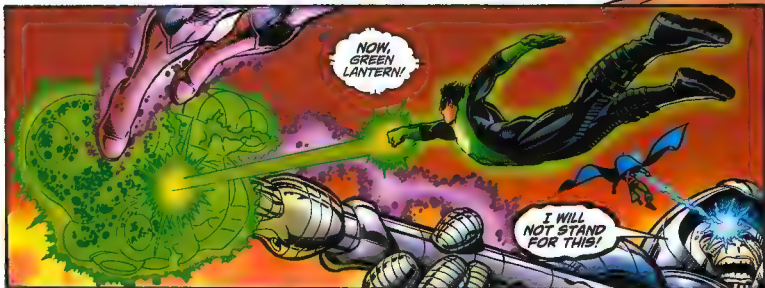
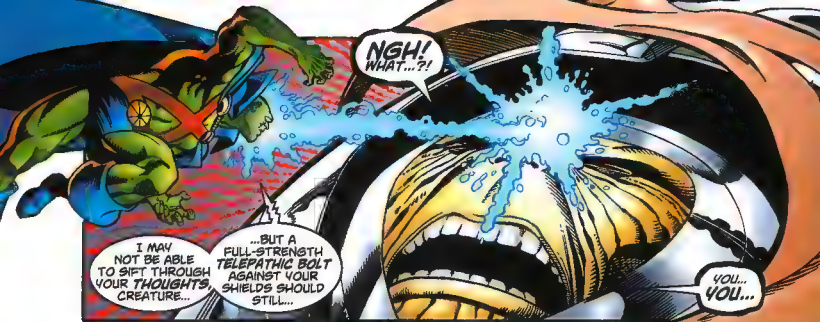
I'M...
DOING MY
BEST, BATMAN!
BUT HE'S...
EXTREMELY...

MARTIAN
MANHUNTER, HIS
STAFF...



GNATS!

YOU THINK
TO SEPARATE
TERMINUS FROM
HIS STAFF? IT
CANNOT BE DONE!
EVEN TO ATTEMPT
IT IS TO COURT...





NICE.

YOU ALL
KEPT HIM SO
BUSY, I HAD TIME
TO ANALYZE HIS
ENERGY, FIGURE
OUT A WAY TO
CHANNEL
IT, AND...

...POW!
THIS TERMINUS
GUY TAKES
HIMSELF
OUT!

THAT
DOESN'T TELL US
WHO HE IS OR WHY
HE'S HERE, LANTERN.
I'D STILL LIKE
TO KNOW...

YOU NEED
NOT CONCERN
YOURSELF,
SUPERMAN.

GOOD
LORD, THAT
VOICE!
IT'S--!



THE BEING IS ALIEN
TO THIS PLANE OF
EXISTENCE.
IT DOES
NOT BELONG
HERE...

HAL...?

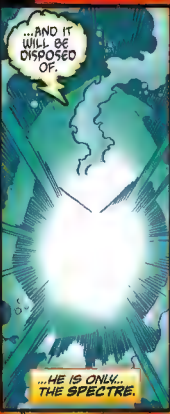
THEY ARE THE
JUSTICE LEAGUE
OF AMERICA...

...THEIR WORLD'S
GREATEST SUPER-
HEROES...

...BUT STILL,
THIS NEW
MANIFESTATION
STOPS THEM IN
THEIR TRACKS.

ONCE, HE WAS
HAL JORDAN.
A HERO. AN
ALLY. A FRIEND.

NOW, HOWEVER...



...AND IT
WILL BE
DISPOSED
OF.

...HE IS ONLY...
THE SPECTRE.

MAN, I'LL
NEVER GET USED
TO THAT. I'VE HAD
COFFEE WITH HIM,
HUNG OUT WITH HIM,
AND NOW...NOW HE'S
WHAT, THE HAND
OF GOD?

WE KNOW
HOW YOU FEEL
KYLE. BELIEVE
ME, WE
KNOW.

ENOUGH.

THERE ARE
STILL PEOPLE
TRAPPED IN THE
RUBBLE, JUSTICE
LEAGUE. LET'S
GO.

ANOTHER
UNIVERSE.
NEW YORK CITY.

IT WAS ONLY TWENTY
MINUTES AGO IT
APPEARED, LOOMING
OVER MANHATTAN,
SPILLING ITS NOXIOUS
SPAWN BY THE
HUNDREDS, THE
THOUSANDS.

SHE-HULK?
JEN,
DON'T--!

THE MIGHTY
AVENGERS
WERE CALLED
OUT TO DEAL
WITH IT...

...BUT INSTEAD...

THE
STARFISH--
THEY'VE GOTTEN
YELLOWJACKET AND
TRIATHLON! THEY'RE
TAKING PEOPLE
OVER--
--CONTROLLING
THEIR MINDS!

JUST DON'T
LET THEM GET NEAR
YOUR FACES, AVENGERS!
DON'T LET THEM GET
NEAR YOU--

SORRY,
HONEY!

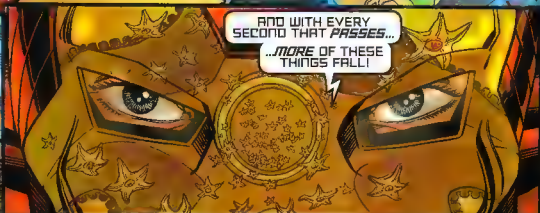
OR
THEY'LL TAKE
YOU OVER,
TOO!



IRON MAN!
JACK
OF HEARTS!

YON
CYCLOPEAN
SEA-BEAST IS
THE WELLSPRING
OF THIS THREAT!
STRIKE AT THE
SOURCE—AND
END IT!

A FOR ANALYSIS, THOR—
BUT NOTHING WE HIT IT WITH
IS MAKING IT EVEN FLINCH!



AND WITH EVERY
SECOND THAT PASSES...

...MORE OF THESE
THINGS FALL!



GET
AWAY!

HOW DO WE STOP
THESE THINGS? HOW
DO WE EVEN FIGHT
THEM?!

I DON'T KNOW,
WARBIRD...JUST KEEP
AT IT!

SORRY,
SIR.

HOPEFULLY,
YOU'LL BE ABLE
TO THANK ME
FOR THIS,
LATER!



WE MUST ADOPT A NEW
STRATEGY. AVENGERS
FOR EVERY PARASITE
WE DESTROY, DOZENS
MORE FALL.

WE CANNOT STOP
THEM ALL, AND
EVENTUALLY, EVEN
OUR MIGHTIEST
WILL...

OH, NO

THEY GOT THOR
BAD, BAD NEWS



SPLOMM

UHH!

PIETRO?



PIETRO, FIGHT IT!
YOU CAN
DO IT--YOU'RE
STRONG! YOU
CAN BEAT IT,
BREAK
FREE!



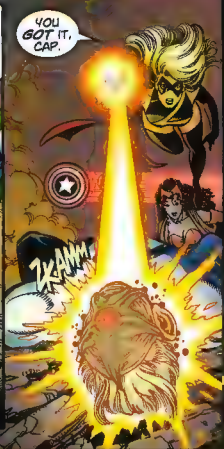
I'M SURE
YOUR BROTHER'S
DOING HIS BEST.
WANDA, BUT NOW
THAT YOU'VE SLOWED
HIM DOWN--MAYBE
HE COULD USE A
LITTLE HELP.

BZAT



GO, WARBIRD!
I'LL HANDLE
THINGS
HERE!

GET THAT
THING OFF
QUICKSILVER'S
FACE--WE
NEED HIS
POWER!



YOU
GOT IT,
CAP.

ZKAMM



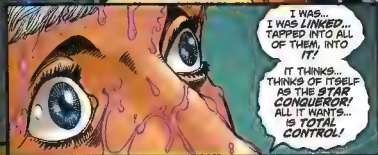
SGHH!

HUHH!



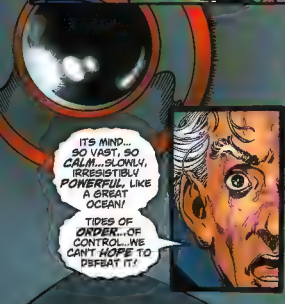
DON'T KNOW IF IT'S
DEAD...OR JUST
UNCONSCIOUS...
BUT AT LEAST IT'S
LETTING...

SPLHKK--!



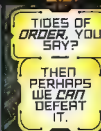
I WAS...
I WAS LINKED...
TAPPED INTO ALL
OF THEM, INTO
IT!

IT THINKS...
THINKS OF ITSELF
AS THE STAR
CONQUEROR!
ALL IT WANTS...
IS TOTAL
CONTROL!



ITS MIND...
SO VAST, SO
CALM... SLOWLY,
IRRESISTIBLY
POWERFUL, LIKE
A GREAT
OCEAN!

TIDES OF
ORDER...OF
CONTROL...WE
CAN'T HOPE TO
DEFEAT IT!



TIDES OF
ORDER, YOU
SAY?

THEN
PERHAPS
WE CAN
DEFEAT
IT.

I HAVE A
THOUGHT...





SHORTLY...

WHATEVER
YOU HAVE IN
MIND, VISION.
DO IT
FAST!

WE'RE RUNNING
OUT OF BREATHING
ROOM HERE!



ALMOST
READY,
CAPTAIN
AMERICA.

SHE IS WANDA
MAXIMOFF--
BETTER
KNOWN AS
THE SCARLET
WITCH.

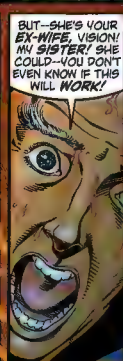
SHE IS A
MUTANT, AND
A SORCERESS.

WANDA,
YOU CAN'T--
THERE **MUST**
BE ANOTHER
WAY!
VISION,
THINK! WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!

SINCE BIRTH, SHE HAS
CHANNELED CHAOS-
MAGIC, SUMMONED IT,
BENT IT TO HER WILL.



ONLY
WHAT I
MUST
PIETRO!



BUT--SHE'S YOUR
EX-WIFE, VISION!
MY SISTER! SHE
COULD--YOU DONT
EVEN KNOW IF THIS
WILL WORK!



I KNOW.
BUT WE
MUST TRY.
NOW,
WANDA.

NOW, AS
IT TAKES
YOUR
MIND.

NOW, SHE TAPS INTO
HER WORLD'S SEETHING
STORE OF CHAOS-MAGIC--



--TAPS INTO IT, AND SENDS
IT FLOODING UPWARD THROUGH
HER MIND, THROUGH HER--AND
INTO THE GREAT, ORDERED
CALM ABOVE.



AAAAAAH

CHAOS, PURE,
WILD, INCHOATE
CHAOS POURS
UPWARD...

AND THE STAR
CONQUEROR
SCREAMS.

AAAAAHHHHHHH



→PFEAUGH!←
THAT WAS...
THAT WAS MOST
STRANGE.



I FELT A
BLAST OF...OF SHEER
MADNESS...

...FOLLOWED BY
PAIN AND RAGE AND
INCOMPREHENSION.
AND THEN...

BE IT
OVER, IRON
MAN?

OVER?
YES, THOR...



...I THINK
IT IS.



→PTHOO!
I MAY NEVER
LOOK AT CALAMARI!
THE SAME WAY
AGAIN...!

JH. HANK.
CALAMARI IS
SQUID...



OH, WHO
CARES?

JUST GET ME A GALLON
OF LISTERINE AND A
BUCKET OF BREATHMINTS!
THAT TASTE...!



ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT,
WANDA?

I'M...I'LL BE FINE,
PIETRO. BUT I THINK
I LEARNED
SOMETHING.

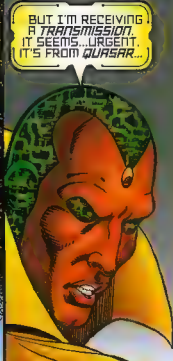
I MADE CONTACT WITH
THE STAR CONQUEROR'S MIND,
AND MANAGED TO STAY
MOSTLY IN CONTROL.

I FELT...
CONFUSION.
SOMETHING VERY
WRONG.



I DON'T THINK IT'S FROM
THIS UNIVERSE. IT DIDN'T
KNOW HOW IT HAD COME
HERE, BUT IT KNEW IT
DIDN'T BELONG...

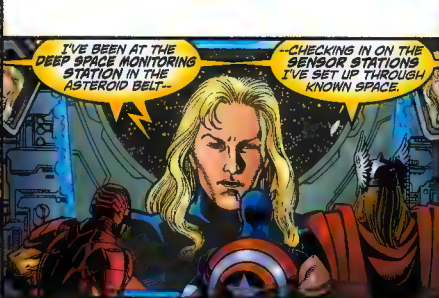
EXCUSE
ME...



BUT I'M RECEIVING
A TRANSMISSION.
IT SEEMS...URGENT.
IT'S FROM QUASAR...



--THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS.



I'VE BEEN AT THE DEEP SPACE MONITORING STATION IN THE ASTEROID BELT--

--CHECKING IN ON THE SENSOR STATIONS I'VE SET UP THROUGH KNOWN SPACE.

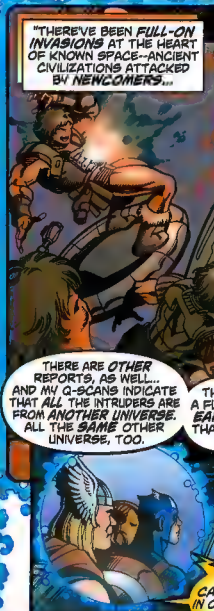


AND I'VE BEEN GETTING, WELL...
...TROUBLING DATA.



"AN INTRUDER IN THE HEART OF THE SH'AR EMPIRE, FOR INSTANCE, JUST APPEARED, WITHOUT RHYME OR REASON.

"AND EVEN THEIR IMPERIAL GUARD'S BEEN HARD-PRESSED TO CONTAIN HIM.



"THERE'VE BEEN FULL-ON INVASIONS AT THE HEART OF KNOWN SPACE--ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS ATTACKED BY NEWCOMERS...

"...WHO SEEM TO HAVE POPPED OUT OF NOWHERE."

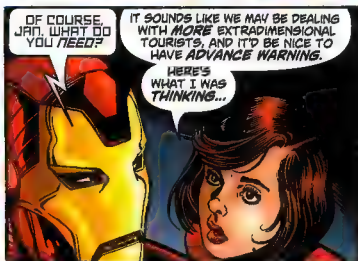
THERE ARE OTHER REPORTS, AS WELL... AND MY Q-SCANS INDICATE THAT ALL THE INTRUDERS ARE FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE. ALL THE SAME OTHER UNIVERSE, TOO.

THERE WAS A FLARE-UP ON EARTH LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO...

YES, WE CAN FILL YOU IN ON THAT ONE.



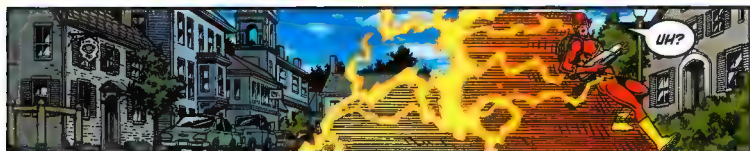
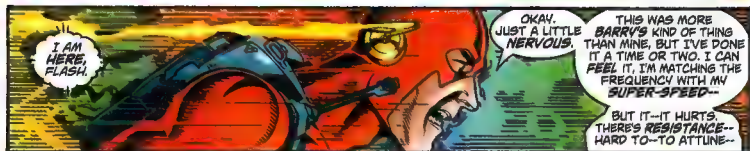
AH, IRON MAN? THOR AND CAP CAN PROBABLY HANDLE THAT, SO...



OF COURSE, JARVIS. WHAT DO YOU NEED?

IT SOUNDS LIKE WE MAY BE DEALING WITH MORE EXTRADIMENSIONAL TOURISTS, AND IT'D BE NICE TO HAVE ADVANCE WARNING.

HERE'S WHAT I WAS THINKING...





THE JLA WATCHTOWER.
ON THEIR EARTH'S MOON.

UH-OH.
THANAGAR
UNDER ATTACK
BY GREEN
UGLIES--

--MONGUL
GETTING PIG-
PILED BY, UH, BY
WHATEVER THOSE
ARE--

I MEAN,
NOT THAT IT COULD
HAPPEN TO A NICER
GUY, BUT THIS DOESN'T
LOOK GOOD...

YOU
WERE RIGHT,
BATMAN.

IT'S NOT
AN ISOLATED
INCIDENT, SO
WHAT IS
IT?

WE
WON'T KNOW
UNTIL FLASH GETS
BACK, AND WE HAVE
MORE DATA. COULD BE
ACCIDENTAL, COULD BE
INTENTIONAL--
WE CAN'T BE
SURE.

WE WILL
STOP IT, BATMAN.
WHATEVER IT IS, IF IT
IS A COSMIC RIFT,
WE'LL HEAL IT...

AND IF
IT'S AN INVASION,
WE MEET IT, AND
REPEL IT. FLASH'S
SCANS WILL--

UH, GUYS?
GUYS, HE'S
BACK.

MAN,
WALLY, WHAT
HAPPENED TO YOU?

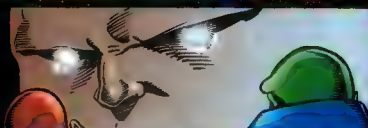
TELL YOU
LATER, MEANWHILE...
DON'T MESS WITH
ANGRY ROTARIANS.

I'LL SAY THIS MUCH,
THOUGH. IF I LIVED OVER
THERE, I'D WANT TO
GET OUT, TOO.
I BARELY DID...AS MY
POWERS FADED, MY
VIBRATIONAL RATE WENT
BACK TO NORMAL...AND
I POPPED BACK INTO
KEYSTONE.

STILL, THE PEOPLE
THERE...YIKES! THERE
WAS THIS KID, AND--

HUH?

RRRT BRRT BRRT BRRT BRRT BRRT BRRT BRRT BRRT BRRT BR



KIND OF... PASSIVE FOR AN ALIEN INVADER, ISN'T HE?

BUT STILL AN ENIGMA, KYLE. I'M REACHING OUT MENTALLY, BUT RECEIVE ONLY A SENSE OF... CURIOSITY?

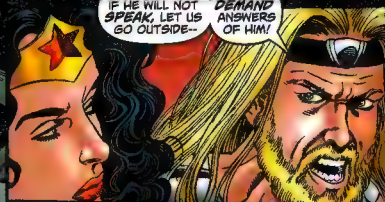
WHO ARE YOU? WHY HAVE YOU COME?

QUI ÊTES-VOUS? POURQUOI ÊTES-VOUS VENU?

מדוע אתה בא? מי אתה?

ENOUGH. IF HE WILL NOT SPEAK, LET US GO OUTSIDE--

--AND DEMAND ANSWERS OF HIM!



HOLD IT, AQUAMAN. WE HAVE SOMEONE ELSE APPROACHING--





"--THERE!"

DO NOT
WORRY ABOUT
THE WATCHER.
HE RARELY
ACTS--

--CHOOSING
INSTEAD ONLY
TO OBSERVE AND
RECORD.

HE
MANIFESTS
FOR THE MOST
MOMENTOUS
EVENTS--

LANTERN.
CONTAIN
HIM.



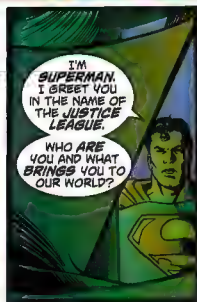
--LIKE THIS
ONE.

ISN'T IT ALWAYS THE WAY? YOU
GO DAYS WITHOUT SEEING
ANY GIANT INEXPLICABLE
COSMIC GUYS--

--AND THEN
TWO OR THREE
ARRIVE ALL
AT ONCE!

I'M
SUPERMAN.
I GREET YOU
IN THE NAME OF
THE JUSTICE
LEAGUE.

WHO ARE
YOU AND WHAT
BRINGS YOU TO
OUR WORLD?



I AM KNOWN AS THE
GRANDMASTER.
I HAIL FROM THE
SAME UNIVERSE AS
THE VARIOUS...
INTRUDERS YOU
ARE CONCERNED
ABOUT.

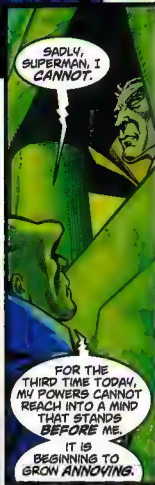
BUT IT IS NOT
IN MY NATURE TO
SEE ANY CONTEST
BE AN **UNEVEN**
ONE--



--SO I HAVE
COME TO TELL
YOU OF THE PERIL
YOU FACE.

OOO,
SPACE
REFEREE.

J'ONN?
CAN YOU
VERIFY
THAT?



SADLY,
SUPERMAN, I
CANNOT.

FOR THE
THIRD TIME TODAY,
MY POWERS CANNOT
REACH INTO A MIND
THAT STANDS
BEFORE ME.

IT IS
BEGINNING TO
GROW ANNOYING.



PERHAPS
THE GOLDEN
LASSO OF
GAEA?

NO ONE WHO
LIVES CAN BE
ENCIRCLED BY IT
AND STILL SPEAK
FALSEHOOD.



OF
COURSE.

SOON...

ARE YOU
NOW CONTENT
THAT I SPEAK
THE TRUTH?
VERY WELL.

WHAT YOU'VE
SEEN THUS FAR IS
ONLY THE BEGINNING.
YOUR WORLD AND MINE
FACE DEVASTATION,
DANGER...EVEN UTTER
DESTRUCTION.

I DO NOT
WARN YOU
LIGHTLY.

THE BARRIERS BETWEEN
OUR WORLDS HAVE
BEEN DELIBERATELY
WEAKENED.

NEITHER WORLD
WILL SURVIVE THE
STRAIN.

BUT THERE IS
ONE WAY TO LESSEN--
OR EVEN PREVENT--
THE DAMAGE.

WAIT. THAT WAS
"WEAKENED"?

TWELVE ITEMS...

ITEMS OF
POWER, SIX FROM
EACH UNIVERSE.
THEY MUST BE
ASSEMBLED...

...OR
COUNTLESS
BILLIONS WILL
DIE.

HM?

THE BELL,
THE WHEEL,
AND THE JAR?

THAT'S
THE MEDUSA
MASK!

THE
ETERNITY
BOOK.

OOH, I
KNOW, I
KNOW!

METAMORPHO'S
WHATSIT-- THE
ORB OF RA!

THE
SPEAR OF
DESTINY.

MY--MY
POWER
BATTERY?!

AND I ASSURE YOU, THE ITEMS FROM MY REALITY ARE EQUALLY POWERFUL. ONLY THESE ITEMS, BROUGHT TOGETHER, CAN END THE DANGER. FAIL TO ASSEMBLE THEM--



--AND A UNIVERSE DIES.

NOT GOOD ENOUGH. WHAT CAUSED THIS THREAT?

HOW WILL THE ITEMS BE USED? WHO WILL WIELD THEM, AND--



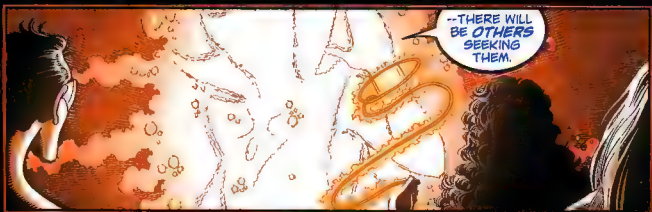
MY APOLOGIES, I HAVE TOLD ALL I WILL TELL.

BUT I PLACE IN YOUR MINDS THE LOCATION THE ITEMS, IN THE TWIN WORLDS.

WHAT YOU DO WITH THE KNOWLEDGE IS UP TO YOU. JUST BE WARNED--



--THERE WILL BE OTHERS SEEKING THEM.



WHAT HE SAID WAS THE TRUTH--I KNOW THAT MUCH. BUT THERE WAS MORE BEHIND IT, SOMETHING HE WASN'T SAYING...



GONE.

SO NOW WHAT? DO WE BELIEVE HIM? SOME GUY WE'VE NEVER MET, NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE? HE CAN POP INTO THE WATCHTOWER AT WILL--
--CAN HE BEAT THE LASSO, TOO? AND WHO ARE THESE OTHERS?



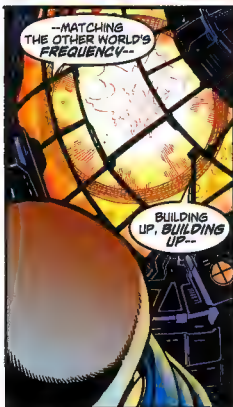
I DON'T LIKE IT. DOING SOMETHING WE DON'T UNDERSTAND, JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE TELLS US TO.

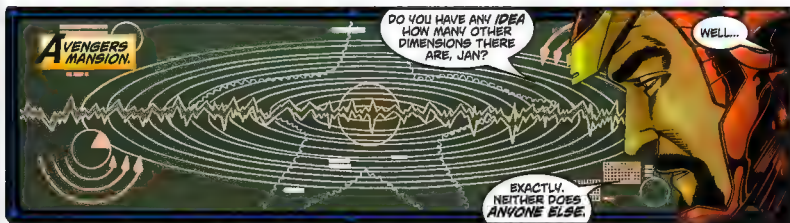
AS OPPOSED TO DOING THE TELLING, HM?

STILL, WE ARE BEING INVADED BY THIS OTHER WORLD. AND BELIEVE ME, FROM WHAT I SAW, IT'S NOT A NICE PLACE.

WE HAVE TO INVESTIGATE, AT THE VERY LEAST.







AVENGERS MANSION.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY OTHER DIMENSIONS THERE ARE, JAN?

WELL...

EXACTLY. NEITHER DOES ANYONE ELSE.



I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CREATE A WARNING SYSTEM THAT'D TELL US IF THE TIME-BARRIER HAS BEEN BREACHED, AND DIMENSIONAL BARRIERS WERE NEXT...

STILL, A ONE-DIMENSIONAL ALARM IS POSSIBLE. I'VE GOT DATA FROM QUASAR, AND JACK OF HEARTS SCANALYZED THE STAR CONQUEROR BEFORE IT FLED--

--SO I'M RIGGING A SYSTEM TO SCAN FOR THE APPEARANCE OF THAT ONE PARTICULAR ENERGY-SIGNATURE--

I HAVE FULL FAITH IN YOU, TONY. I'M SURE YOU--HEY, LOOK WHO'S HERE!



I SENT OUT A CALL FOR RESERVISTS AND ANY INACTIVE AVENGERS WHO COULD HELP US OUT ON THIS ONE--AND GUESS WHO CAME A'RUNNING?

YOU KNOW YOU GUYS CAN'T GET ALONG WITHOUT ME.

I'M GONE FOR A WHILE, AND YOU START HAVING TROUBLE WITH ANGRY SEAFOOD?

I MEAN, REALLY!



HOW'S IT GOING, TONY?

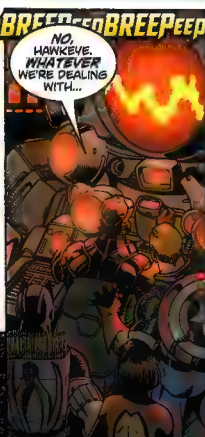
GOOD TO SEE YOU, HAWKEYE. C'MERE...

NOT SURE, BUT I THINK I'VE...



YOU'RE JUST TESTING THAT THING, RIGHT?

THAT'S JUST A TEST.



NO, HAWKEYE. WHATEVER WE'RE DEALING WITH...

"...IT'S HERE."

THAT RUINED CITY--THE BUILDINGS, THE CARVINGS--IF WE COULD CHECK IT OUT FOR A MINUTE OR TWO...

IT DID LOOK INTERESTING. ATOM, IMPOSSIBLY OLD, PROBABLY PRE-HUMAN...

OKAY, AQUAMAN, YOU AND ME...

WE DON'T HAVE TIME.

WE'LL SPLIT UP, DO A QUICK RECONNAISSANCE, FIND OUT SOMETHING ABOUT THIS WORLD, THEN MEET AT THE SITE OF THE FIRST ARTIFACT.

STAY MIND-LINKED, AND JUST OBSERVE AND REPORT. NO GETTING INVOLVED.

BYEE! DON'T FORGET TO WRITE...

DIANA, ATOM...

LATVERIA.

WE'RE INVISIBLE, RIGHT?

INVISIBLE AND INAUDIBLE. WHAT IS THIS?

DISCREET DOOM

THEY CHEER FOR HIM, SING HIS PRAISES... UNDER THREAT OF DEATH!

THIS IS NO WAY FOR A MONARCH TO ACT! WE SHOULD...

SHOULD NOTHING, AQUAMAN, JUST OBSERVE AND MOVE ON.

LEAVE IT, JONN, MOVE ON.

GENOSHA.

IT'S LIKE-LIKE WALKING THROUGH HIROSHIMA, THE DEVASTATION!

WHO COULD DO THIS, KNOWING WHAT IT WOULD...?

A SCAN OF NEIGHBORING NATIONS REVEALS THESE PEOPLE WERE BOMBED FOR BEING GENETIC MUTANTS. FOR THE CRIME OF BEING DIFFERENT.

MICHIGAN.

LOOK AT THIS! THE DESTRUCTION, THE CARNAGE--THE ARMY OBVIOUSLY COULDN'T STOP THAT THING!

MAYBE...

WE STAY WITH THE PLAN, SUPERMAN, DON'T GET INVOLVED.

NEW YORK.

HENK.

DRUG DEALERS NEVER COULD STAND THEM, EVEN BACK WHEN I WAS A CROOK.

BETTER GET BACK TO--

--TO--



BATS?



HEL-LO? WERE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO YOURSELF?!

"STICK TO THE PLAN," HE SAYS. "OBSERVE AND MOVE ON," HE SAYS.

BUT DOES HE FOLLOW THE PLAN? OR DOES HE SPEND TWENTY MINUTES BEATING UP SOME LOON IN KEVLAR TO SAVE SOME DRUG DEALERS?!

FRANKLY, PLAS, I WISH WE'D DONE THE SAME.

I AGREE.

BUT WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES BE DISTRACTED FROM OUR MISSION. PEOPLE DIED IN KEYSTONE CITY. OUR WORLD IS ENDANGERED, TOO.

THIS WORLD. THIS WORLD!

IT'S LUSH, IT'S ALIVE-- THERE ARE HEROES HERE TOO, FROM WHAT WE'VE DISCOVERED. HOW CAN THEY ALLOW THIS? HOW CAN THEY STAND FOR IT? DON'T THEY CARE?

UM...
SUPES?

LET'S GET THOSE ARTIFACTS. I DON'T TRUST THE PEOPLE HERE.

I'LL FEEL BETTER IF WE DECIDE HOW TO USE THEM.

AN ISLAND IN THE SEA OF OKHOTSK.

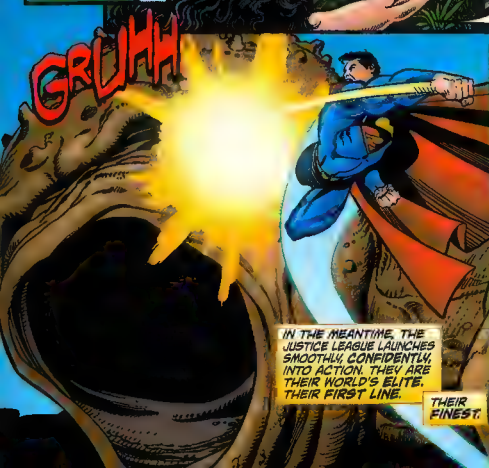
THE FIRST ONE'S HERE, RIGHT? WE CAN ALL FEEL IT.

AND I TELL YOU, IT'S FREAKY--IT'S LIKE KNOWING WHERE YOUR SOCKS ARE, BUT YOU'VE NEVER OWNED ANY S--
--WHOA! EARTHQUAKE!

NO, PLASTIC MAN! THERE!
LOOK!



MAYBE
WE DON'T,
KYLE.



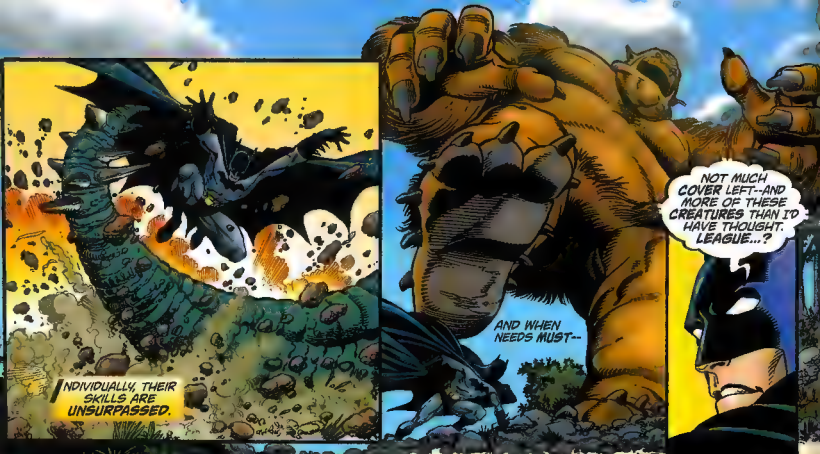
IN THE MEANTIME, THE JUSTICE LEAGUE LAUNCHES SMOOTHLY, CONFIDENTLY, INTO ACTION. THEY ARE THEIR WORLD'S ELITE. THEIR FIRST LINE.

THEIR
FINEST.



THEY HAVE FACED COUNTLESS MENACES THAT WOULD STAGGER THE IMAGINATION.

THEY HAVE TRIUMPHED OVER THEM ALL.



NOT MUCH COVER LEFT--AND MORE OF THESE CREATURES THAN I'D HAVE THOUGHT. LEAGUE...?

AND WHEN NEEDS MUST--

INDIVIDUALLY, THEIR SKILLS ARE UNSURPASSED.



GOT YOU COVERED, BATS.

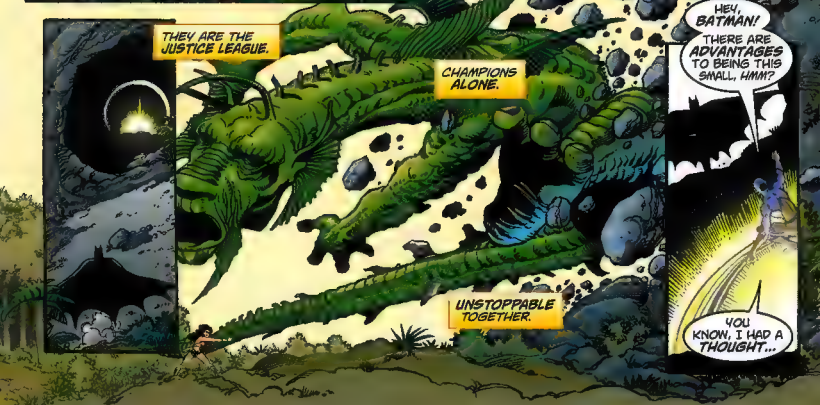
STEADY ON THE RIGHT... STEADY ON THE LEFT...

PLASTIC MAN.
OH, OKAY.



KRAKAM

--THEY COME TOGETHER INTO THE GREATEST FIGHTING FORCE THEIR WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.



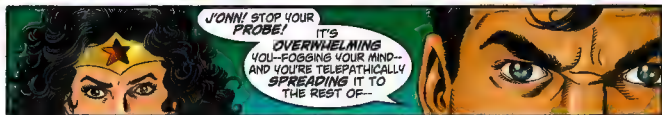
THEY ARE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE.

CHAMPIONS ALONE.

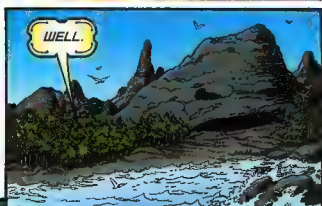
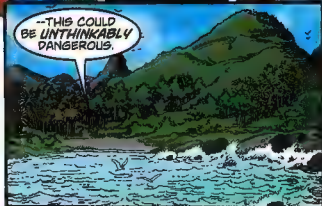
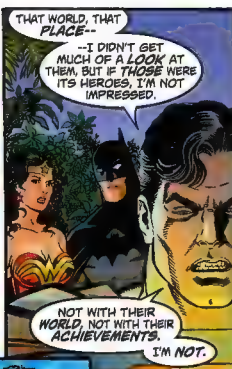
UNSTOPPABLE TOGETHER.

HEY, BATMAN!
THERE ARE ADVANTAGES TO BEING THIS SMALL, HMM?

YOU KNOW, I HAD A THOUGHT...







MORE OF THEM?

SWIFTLY, AVENGERS--
LEST THEY
ESCAPE!

SNH?

UHH!

HMM?

WHAT--?

A FORCE FIELD!
AND EVEN WHEN I
WILL MY ANDROID
FORM TO FULL
INTANGIBILITY,
I CANNOT --

IT'S A
TRAP.

THEY
LEFT BEHIND A
TRAP, AND WE
BLUNDERED INTO
IT LIKE--

I'M
NOT SO SURE,
HAWKEYE. NOT
UNLESS THEY LEFT
ONE OF THEIR
OWN BEHIND,
AS WELL.

QUICKSILVER!
DON'T GET TOO
FAR AHEAD! WE DON'T
KNOW WHAT WE
MIGHT BE--

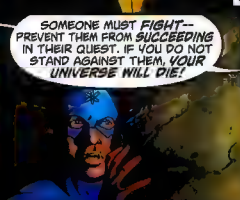
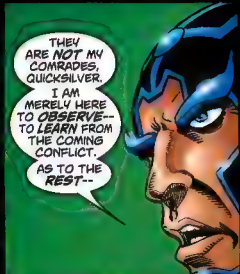
GOOD
AFTERNOON,
CAPTAIN
AMERICA.

YOU ARE
RIGHT TO BE
CAUTIOUS. BUT THIS IS
NOT A TRAP. I MERELY
WISHED TO SPEAK TO
YOU WITHOUT UNDUE...
EXCITEMENT.

YOU
MAY CALL ME

METRON.







IF THIS BE
TRUE, THEN THESE
VARIABLES MUST
BE STOPPED!
AYE--



--AND
SWIFTLY!



UFF! LITTLE
WARNING NEXT
TIME, THUNDER
GOD--?

WE'LL
NEED A WAY TO
FOLLOW THEM--
BACK TO THEIR
WORLD--



THEN TELL
US, ENIGMATIC
ONE

TELL US
HOW WE MIGHT
FIND THESE
FIENDS!



SKIP IT, THOR--I'M
SURE HE'S TAKEN A
"VOW OF MYSTERY,"
OR SOMETHING--THESE
TYPES ALWAYS DO.
MAYBE I CAN ADAPT
THE MODULATOR...
...INFUSE US WITH
THEIR WORLD'S BASE
SIGNATURE, AND...



IT IS NOT
NECESSARY,
IRON MAN...

...ANY MORE
THAN ARE THOR'S
THREATS. HERE,
SHE WILL AID
YOU.

AND
NOW...



SHE...?

HE'S
ESCAPING!
QUICKSILVER!
GO!



I SEE NO
REASON TO
TRUST THIS
METEOR.
BUT IF HIS
CLAIMS CAN
BE VERIFIED...

YOU SAID IT, VIZH.
ANYONE PLAYING
WITH THE ULTIMATE
NULLIFIER--LET
ALONE THE REST
A' THAT STUFF--
IS PLAYIN' WITH
FIRE, BIG
TIME!

WE'VE
GOT TO GET IT
BACK, AND SHUT
THEM DOWN--
PRONTO!



I'LL CALL THE MANSION, LET THE WASP
AND THE OTHERS KNOW WHAT'S GOING
ON. IRON MAN, CAN YOU ANALYZE
THAT GADGET? IS IT ANY
USE...?

SORRY, CAP.
GONE.



I DON'T... DON'T THINK
IT'S A "GADGET," CAP.
SHE'S MORE... ALIVE.

SHE'S
SPEAKING TO
ME... THROUGH
MY ARMOR.
THROUGH MY
HEART. SHE'S
CALLED A
MOTHER
BOX...
AND SHE AND
I... WE
CAN...

PING PING-PING PING

SHORTLY--IF SUCH A
WORD EVEN APPLIES,
ACROSS REALITIES--

--IN METROPOLIS--

LANGLANGLANGLANGLANGLANGLANGLANGLANG

YOU SEE,
MYRNA? IT'S JUST
LIKE I TOLD
YOU--
--WHEN
YOU WORK WITH
LOOPHOLE, YOU'RE
GUARANTEED
SUCCESS!

ANOTHER BANK BEFORE
WE DEPART, PERHAPS? WITH
SUPERMAN OUT OF TOWN ON
JLA BUSINESS, THERE'S
NO ONE TO STOP
US FROM--

WH-WHA--?

ALL RIGHT,
AVENGERS--
--BE
READY FOR
ANYTHING!

I-- --AH-- --THEY-- --KILL
THEM!

OH,
LOOK.

THE
WELCOME
WAGON.



AND IN MOMENTS...

THEY'LL HAVE POLICE HERE. THEY CAN TAKE CARE OF THINGS.

DO THEY, WANDA? PARTS OF THIS CITY SEEM LIKE MODERN-DAY NEW YORK, BUT...

AYE, BUT PARTS DO TH SEEM STRANGELY LIKE SOME FUTURE-WORLD.



AW, SO THEY'VE GOT WEIRD ARCHITECTS. I WOULDN'T SWEAT IT, TH--



YOU SHOULD, HAWKEYE. WE ALL SHOULD.

WE'RE IN AN UNKNOWN, UNPREDICTABLE WORLD, AND WE'RE OUTSIDERS.

WE SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS--IT'S LIKELY WE'LL BE MET WITH HOSTILITY, OR--

UH... CAP?



HEY!

THAT WAS GREAT!

...AUTOGRAPH...

...PHOTO...

TOOK OUT THOSE GUYS ALMOST AS GOOD AS...

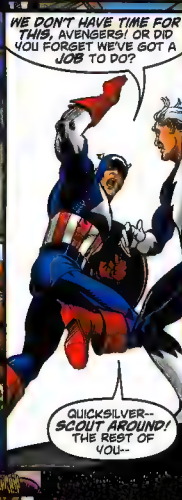
HIM?



--YOU WITH THE JSA? YOU'RE TOO OLD TO BE TITANS...

--CAN YOU MAKE IT OUT TO KIRK?

UH... SURE. NO PROBLEM. I DON'T SEE WHY N --



WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS, AVENGERS! OR DID YOU FORGET WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO?

"--MOVE OUT, NOW!"

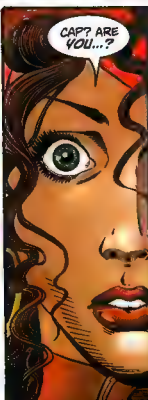


BUT--JUST A SIGNATURE--?

NOW.

WHO JAMMED THAT STAR UP HIS STRIPES...?

QUICKSILVER--SCOUT AROUND! THE REST OF YOU--





—YOUR
INVASION STOPS
HERE.
YOUR OWN
WORLD MAY BE A
SORRY DISGRACEFUL
SHAMBLES--BUT YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO BRING YOUR
MADNESS TO Ours,
AS WELL.

FACED WITH AN ASSEMBLAGE OF
POWER THIS PREPRESSING,
ANY OTHER GROUP MIGHT TRY
TO RUN, TO ESCAPE.

BUT THESE ARE THE
AVENGERS, THEIR
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST.
THEY'VE FACED GODS,
GENOCIDAL MADMEN,
ALIEN ARMADAS AND
MORE.
THEY DON'T
SCARE EASILY.

STORAGE



"... LET US SHOW
THESE CATIFFS
WHAT WE THINK
OF THEM!"



GH-UHH!

ELSEWHERE...

AND SO IT
BEGINS.

THEY DO NOT KNOW THEY
PLAY A GAME--A GAME OF
MY DEVISING.
BUT THE
CONFLICT IS WELL
ESTABLISHED--

--AND THE
STAKES, QUITE
REAL.

YES--

--BUT YOU
REALIZE, I
HOPE--

--THAT
KRONA HAS NO
INTENTION OF
ABIDING BY YOUR
RULES.

IF HE
WINS, HE WILL
CLAIM HIS PRIZE. IF
HE LOSES-- HE'LL DO
WHATEVER HE MUST
TO GAIN WHAT HE
SEEKS.

TRUE. NEITHER
UNIVERSE MAY
SURVIVE, IN
THE END.

BUT THIS
WAS THE
ONLY WAY
TO DELAY
HIM.

TO
BUY SOME
TIME.

SO EVENTS
WILL HAVE TO
PLAY OUT AS
THEY WILL.

AND FOR
THE SAKE OF TWO
UNIVERSES, LET US HOPE
KRONA DOES NOT DISCOVER--

--THAT I AM
SIMULTANEOUSLY
PLAYING A DEEPER
GAME--!

663
663





66
66



PROLOGUE: THE
RECENT PAST.

KRONA?

MY
KNOWLEDGE IS
VAST, BUT I KNOW
NOT THE
NAME.

EXPLAIN.

I AM A SCIENTIST.
A SEEKER OF
KNOWLEDGE.
I SEARCH FOR THE
SECRET OF CREATION,
AND THE TRUTH OF WHAT
EXISTED BEFORE.

IN MY HOME
UNIVERSE, I SENT
TIME-PROBES BACK--
BACK ALMOST TO THE
MOMENT OF THE BIG
BANG ITSELF--

YOU SEE? YOU
SEE?!

AN IMAGE! A SHADOW...
LIKE A GIANT HAND! THERE
ARE FORCES AT WORK
HERE... FORCES WE MUST
UNDERSTAND!

I MUST GO
BACK FURTHER...
FURTHER...!

"BUT WHEN
I PRESSED
FORWARD, A
FORCE WAS
UNLEASHED,
DANGEROUS,
DESTRUCTIVE..."

"AND MY FELLOWS CONDEMNED ME
FOR SEEKING TRUTH, FOR DOING WHAT
THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE THEMSELVES."

"THEY FEARED A LEGEND OF
UTTER DESTRUCTION SHOULD
THE TRUTH BE LEARNED."

THEN
THINK OF ME
AS LIKELY
DEATH...

...DEATH
FOR THIS ENTIRE
UNIVERSE.

WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN
DEATH, KRONA...

...AND WILL NOT
ROB YOU OF YOUR
IMMORTALITY.

BUT YOU
WILL BE REDUCED
TO DISEMBODIED
ENERGY...

...TO CIRCLE
HARMLESSLY
THROUGHOUT THE
UNIVERSE
FOREVER.

"AND I WAS
CAST OUT."

"IN TIME, I TRAVELED BEYOND MY UNIVERSE...

"...AND SOUGHT
ANSWERS STILL.

"BUT THE LEGEND, IT SEEMED, WAS TRUE..."

"...AND WHATEVER METHODS I TRY,
WHATEVER APPROACH I TAKE, NO UNIVERSE
HAS SURVIVED MY...INVESTIGATIONS."

NOW I AM
HERE, AND I
INTEND TO TRY
ANEN.

YOU
WOULD...WOULD
TRULY DESTROY
A UNIVERSE TO
FURTHER YOUR
QUEST? A
UNIVERSE?

I HAVE
DONE SO
ALREADY.

AND WILL
DO SO A MILLION
TIMES OVER, TO GAIN
WHAT I SEEK.

I HAVE TOLD YOU THIS
BECAUSE YOUR OWN
POWERS HAVE BLOCKED
MY NEWEST PROBES.

BUT THE POWER OF ALL
I HAVE DESTROYED
IS MINE. SO STAND ASIDE,
OR I SHALL--

A MOMENT.

I DO NOT WISH MY
UNIVERSE DESTROYED.

PERHAPS I SHOULD
MENTION, THEN, THAT
THERE IS A BEING IN THIS
REALITY WHO HAS LIVED
THROUGH THE BIG
BANG...

...AND WHO
KNOWS WHAT CAME
BEFORE.

WH-WHAT?!

TELL ME THIS
BEING'S NAME, THEN!
ITS NAME, AND WHERE
I MIGHT FIND IT!
SWIFTLY, BEFORE
I--

AH. IT
SEEMS WE BOTH
DESIRE SOMETHING
OF THE OTHER.

I AM
EN DWI GAST,
THE GRANDMASTER.
I LIVE FOR GAMES OF
SKILL, PERHAPS...

...WE SHOULD
PLAY A GAME
TO DECIDE
MATTERS?

PROLOGUE
ENDS.

Once upon
a time...

...there was a
Universe.



BOOK
TWO:

a CONTEST *of* CHAMPIONS!

METROPOLIS.

A MOMENT AGO, SUPERMAN, SPEAKING FOR THE JUSTICE LEAGUE, ORDERED THE AVENGERS TO STAND DOWN AND BE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

A MOMENT AGO, THOR RESPONDED FOR THE AVENGERS, PUTTING SUPERMAN THROUGH A BUILDING WITH HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER.

THAT WAS A MOMENT AGO

VERILY...

...THIS "JUSTICE LEAGUE" MAY BE RAVING, DANGEROUS MADMEN... BUT STILL, THEY ARE DOUGHTY WARRIORS NEEDED!

AW, THEY'RE NOT SO TOUGH, THOR--THEY'RE JUST SQUADRON SUPREME LITE, LIKE I SAID!

HERE--

--I'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE--

--STARTING WITH THE WHIZZER WANNABE IN RED!

AH-AH! NOT THAT EASY, "PURPLE ARROW!"

HEH

BOOMERANGS ARROW SETS ON FIRE!

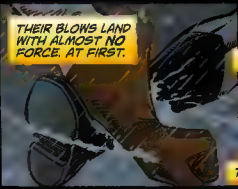
SORRY--

HUH?





THEIR BLOWS LAND
WITH ALMOST NO
FORCE. AT FIRST.



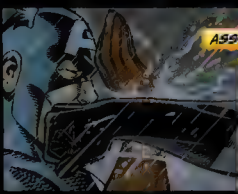
A TAP.



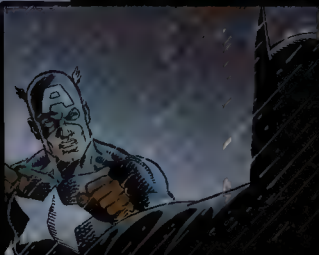
A BRUSH.



THEY TEST.



ASSESS.



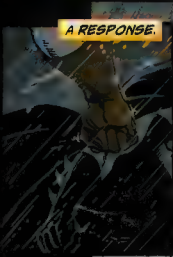
A FEINT.



A COUNTER.



A SHIFT.



A RESPONSE.

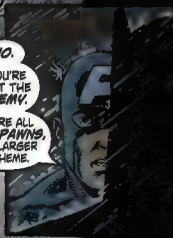
ALL RIGHT.

IT'S CONCEIVABLE YOU
COULD BEAT ME, AVENGER.
BUT IT WOULD TAKE YOU A
VERY LONG TIME. TELL
ME THIS, THOUGH--

--DO YOU
WANT TO?

NO.
YOU'RE
NOT THE
ENEMY.

WE'RE ALL
JUST PAWNS
IN A LARGER
SCHEME.



THEN WE MIGHT BE BETTER
OFF LETTING THE OTHERS **PLAY
OUT EVENTS** ACCORDING TO
THE DESIRES OF WHOEVER'S
**PULLING THE
STRINGS--**

--WHILE THE
**TWO OF US TRY TO
FIND SOME REAL
ANSWERS.**

YOU'RE
ON. LET'S
GO.

**AS THEY
DEPART...**

I--BLAST IT,
I CAN'T--WHAT'S
BLOCKING--

WANDA?
WHAT IS WRONG,
MY SISTER?

I'M TRYING TO
CAST A HEX, BUT I
CAN'T--CAN'T SUMMON
THE **CHAOS
MAGIC!**

IT'S EASY
AT HOME,
BUT HERE
IT'S--

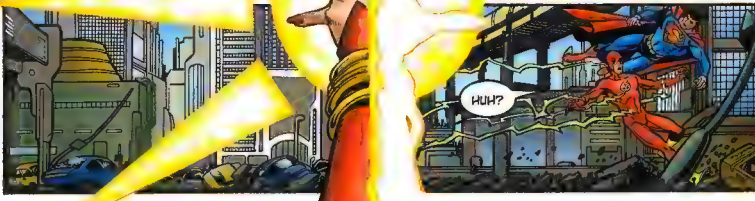
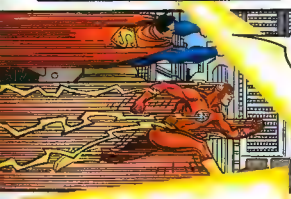
--IT
FEELS
SO--

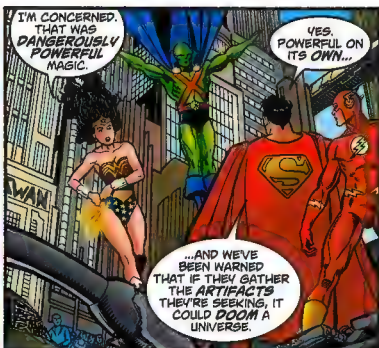
OH.

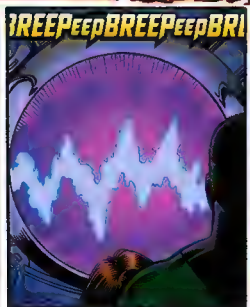
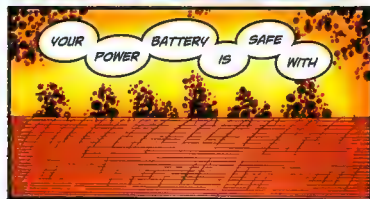
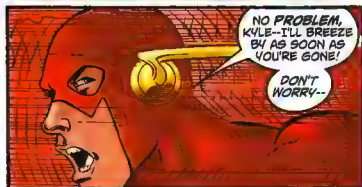
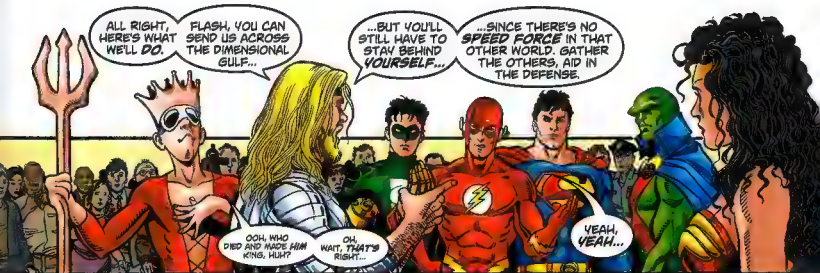
WANDA?

Oh!

THE POWER POURS
INTO HER, RIPS THROUGH
HER--SMASHING OUTWARD
LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE, A
HURRICANE, A TIDAL WAVE--







SOMEWHERE
ALONG I-95...



HUH?

THIS IS
METROPOLIS?
THIS IS ALL
METROPOLIS IS
IN THEIR
WORLD?

WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
THESE
PEOPLE?

AS NEAR AS I CAN
TELL FROM A QUICK
SCAN...

...THIS EARTH IS SLIGHTLY SMALLER
THAN OURS, AND HAS FEWER CITIES,
LESS URBAN GROWTH, AT LEAST
ON THE EAST COAST.

MAYBE THEY'RE JUST
BACKWARD.

SUPERMAN!
THAT'S A TERRIBLY
UNCHARITABLE--

NONE OF THIS IS
IMPORTANT, NOT AT
THE MOMENT. THERE
ARE FIVE ITEMS LEFT
IN THIS REALITY-PLANE.
BUT WE SHOULDN'T
SPREAD OURSELVES
TOO THIN.

THREE
TEAMS.

GOOD.
KYLE, YOU'RE
WITH ME.

ARTHUR...

ISIGH

VOICKS--
AND
WAAH!!



ALL RIGHT,
EVERONE--

--YOU'VE BEEN
GIVEN YOUR
POSITIONS,
CIRCLING THE
GLOBE.

AS SOON AS
THE TRACKER
TELLS US WHERE
THEY'RE
STRIKING--

--MOVE
IN.



SOMEBODY'LL HAVE
TO STAY BEHIND,
KEEP AN EYE ON
THINGS...



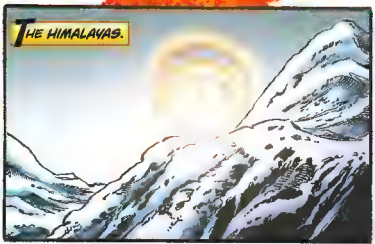
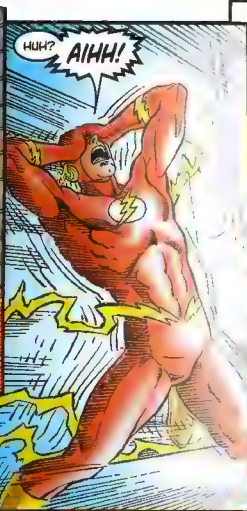
I'LL DO IT, WASP. YOU
AND YELLOWJACKET HAVE
MORE EXPERIENCE.
YOU GET INTO THE
FIELD.

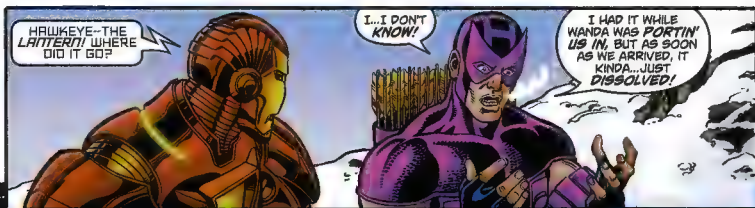
THANKS,
TRIATHLON--

--I
APPRECIATE
IT.



SURE, SURE.
JUST BRING BACK
THE GOLD, HUH?





HAWKEYE--THE LANTERN! WHERE DID IT GO?

I...I DON'T KNOW!

I HAD IT WHILE WANDA WAS PORTIN' US IN, BUT AS SOON AS WE ARRIVED, IT KINDA...JUST DISSOLVED!

"CLINT, I SCANNED THAT THING--IT COULD POWER MANHATTAN FOR A YEAR OR MORE, AND STILL NOT RUN OUT! IF WE'VE LOST IT..."



1-1.

TIE SCORE.

THE GAME BEGINS IN EARNEST...



SANTO RICO. THE AVENGERS' UNIVERSE.

THIS EARTH MAY BE SMALLER THAN OURS, SUPERMAN...



...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE GOT ROOM FOR SOME COUNTRIES WE DON'T HAVE!

PERHAPS. SOME OF OURS AREN'T HERE, HOWEVER. SANTA PRISCA. HASARAGUA. KOCHATAN...ALL MISSING.

BUT THIS-- IS THIS A MONUMENT TO SOMETHING? IS THIS THE RESPECT THEIR HEROES EARN?

THIS?



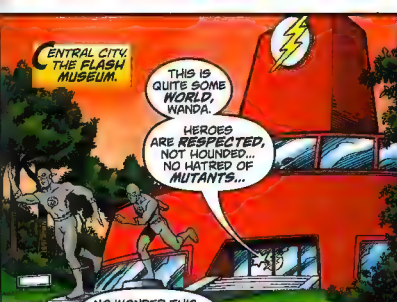
IF THEY CAN'T INSPIRE THE POPULACE, I SUPPOSE THIS IS WHAT THEY GET.

I'LL USE MY X-RAY VISION. SEARCH FOR THE ARTIFACT...

BETTER LOOK FAST, BIG BLUE--



--'CAUSE WE'VE GOT COMPANY!



CENTRAL CITY:
THE FLASH
MUSEUM.

THIS IS
QUITE SOME
WORLD,
WANDA.

HEROES
ARE RESPECTED,
NOT HOUNDED,
NO HATRED OF
MUTANTS...

NO WONDER THIS
"JUSTICE LEAGUE"
IS SO ASSURED. THEY
HAVE IT EASY!

YES,
HERE IS THE
CREATURE WE
FOUGHT...THE
STARFISH...

AND HERE,
SISTER. LOOK
AT THIS!

THE SPEEDSTERS HERE...THEY TAP INTO SOMETHING CALLED THE "SPEED FORCE" THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE RED-CLAD ONE SO FAST!

PERHAPS, IF YOU CAN
TAP INTO THEIR CHAOS
MAGIC, I CAN--

YES...

WANDA?
ARE YOU
WELL?

IF SHE IS,
INTERLOPER...

...SHE
WON'T
BE FOR
LONG!



ASGARD...

TELL ME,
DIANA...

...HOW
EXACTLY DID
WE TRAVEL
HERE?

I KNOW
YOU SENSED
THE ARTIFACT
WE SEEK,
BUT...

I FOLLOWED
THE PATH, AQUAMAN.
IT IS SIMILAR TO HOW
I REACH OLYMPUS,
WHEN I TRAVEL
THERE.

IT IS...
HARD TO EXPLAIN--
NOT FOR MOST
MORTAL MINDS TO
UNDERSTAND.

"MORTAL
MINDS." DO
YOU THINK I'M
SOME--

ARTHUR--
LOOK!



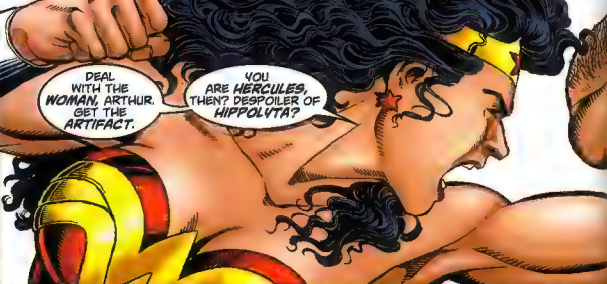
HAH!
I KNEW
IT!

YOU VANISHED FROM
OUR SCANNERS--
AND I KNEW WHERE
YOU'D GONE!

HOWDY.

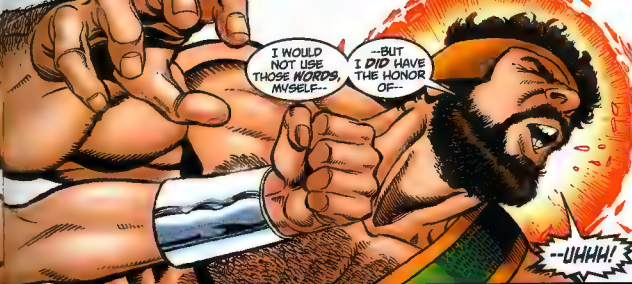
I HAVE
ASKED THE
ASGARDIANS NOT
TO INTERFERE.
COME DOWN,
THEN--

--AND LET
HERCULES
TEST YOUR
METTLE!



DEAL WITH THE WOMAN, ARTHUR. GET THE ARTIFACT.

YOU ARE HERCULES, THEN? DESPOILER OF HIPPOLYTA?



I WOULD NOT USE THOSE WORDS, MYSELF...

...BUT I DID HAVE THE HONOR OF...

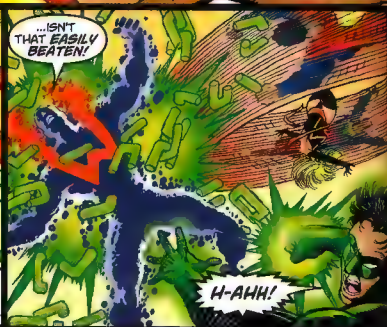
--UH--



HI, I'M THE SHE-HULK. HOW DO YOU LIKE ME SO FAR?

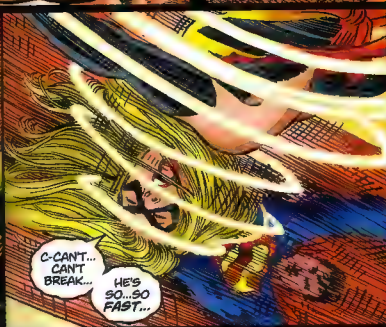


I'VE GOT THIS ONE, SUPERMAN! YOU NEED A HAND?



ISN'T THAT EASILY BEATEN!

H-AHH!



C-CANT... CANT BREAK... HE'S SO...SO FAST...



HANG ON, WARBIRD! JUST HANG ON! I'LL BE THERE IN A MINUTE!

OH, LIKE FUN YOU WILL, PAL!



BLUE BEETLE!

CANT YOU AND BLACK CANARY HANDLE ONE OPPONENT?



YES, YES, I AM.

MAYBE NOT AS FAST AS YOUR FLASH.

...BUT FAST ENOUGH!

OH? ARE YOU FAST ENOUGH--

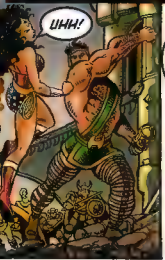


--TO DODGE THIS?



N-NO!

C-CANT LET THEM-- MUSTN'T LET--

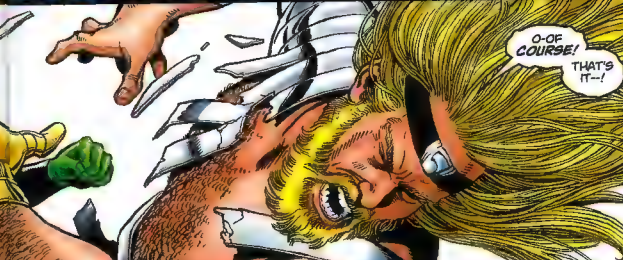


UHH!



LOOK, GUY-- YOU'RE STRONG, AND YOU'RE PLENTY TOUGH, AND YOU'RE NOT BAD-LOOKING, BUT FACE IT--

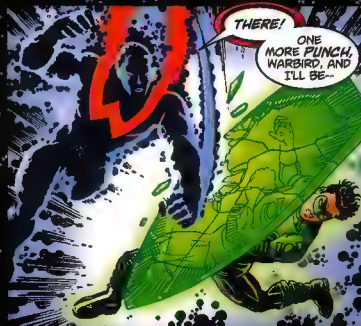
--YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BEAT ME!



O-O OF COURSE! THAT'S IT--



HSH!



THERE!
ONE
MORE PUNCH,
WARBIRD, AND
I'LL BE--



SORRY.



SHE
COULDN'T
WAIT.



SUPERMAN,
LOOK!

UH-HA...



THERE IT
IS! THE ORB
OF RA!

"2-1."



HEY!
COME BACK
HERE!

YOU'RE
AS SLEEKY
AS AN EEL!

I'LL TAKE
THAT AS A
COMPLIMENT,
SHE-HULK.



AND I WOULDN'T MIND
FINDING OUT SOME
DAY WHICH OF US
WOULD TRULY WIN
A BATTLE.
BUT WHAT
I'D FORGOTTEN
IS THAT I DON'T
NEED TO BEAT
YOU.



JUST TO
CLAIM THE
PRIZE.
AND I
CAN SENSE
IT...



STAND
BACK, ALL
OF YOU!

HIPPOLYTA
WAS MY MOTHER--
AND I SHALL PUNISH
THIS VILAIN AS I
SEE--



WONDER
WOMAN! I
HAVE IT!

HAVE IT!

"3-1."



WH...
WHAT...



WANDA!
WHAT HAPPENED?

I
HAPPENED.



WHAT
WE SEEK IS
THAT WAY.

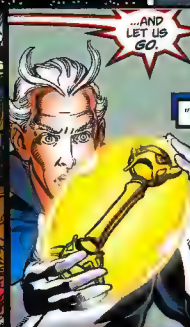
YOU...DO
NOT SOUND
YOURSELF, WANDA.
IF YOU ARE ILL,
WE MUST...



IT IS THE CHAOS MAGIC.
IT IS STRONG, CORRUPTING.
I FEEL IT... EATING AWAY AT
ME. AT MY SOUL,
MY MIND.

BUT I WILL...
ENDURE, AS LONG
AS I MUST.

THE
ARTIFACT IS
THE WAND OF
WATOOMS.
TAKE IT...

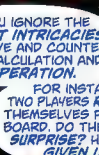
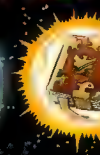


...AND
LET US
GO.

"3-2."



THE GAME
MOVES TOO SLOWLY,
GRANDMASTER. I
BEGIN TO LOSE
PATIENCE...



AH, YOU IGNORE THE
ELEGANT INTRICACIES
OF IT. MOVE AND COUNTER-
MOVE. CALCULATION AND
DESPERATION.

FOR INSTANCE,
TWO PLAYERS REMOVED
THEMSELVES FROM THE
BOARD. DO THEY PLAN A
SURPRISE? HAVE THEY
GIVEN UP?



"WHERE MIGHT THEY BE?"



YOU...LOST A PARTNER?



I DID.
NOW COME DOWN
HERE, IF YOU'RE THROUGH
SIGHTSEEING, WE HAVE
WORK TO DO.



WHA!
THAT'S HOW
IT IS WITH
HIM, EH?



THIS IS
UNUSUAL FOR
YOU, B. VISITORS,
IN THE BATCAVE?

UNUSUAL
CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHAT HAVE
WE GOT?

NOTHING
ON THIS
"GRANDMASTER."
I'VE GOT ZATANNA
AT THE WATCHTOWER,
TRACING THAT
WOMAN'S CHAOS
MAGIC--



--AND
DISPATCHING
FORCES TO COLLECT
THE ARTIFACTS.
FROM WHAT I'VE
SEEN OF THESE
AVENGERS, I CAN'T
PROMISE THAT'LL
GIVE YOU MUCH
TIME, THOUGH.

NICE TO HAVE AN
OVERCONFIDENT
FOE, MAYAM. IT MAKES
IT EASIER.

BUT I'M NOT
SURPRISED THE
GRANDMASTER'S
INVOLVED. THE
AVENGERS HAVE HAD
EXPERIENCE WITH
HIS DEADLY COSMIC
GAMES.



THERE MUST BE
A PLAYER ON THE
OTHER
SIDE,
THOUGH.

YES. AND WHILE YOU
DEALT WITH METRON,
SOMETHING DOESN'T
RING RIGHT ABOUT
THAT.

METRON'S A
SEEKER, AN EXPLORER.
HE'S CRAFTY, BUT NOT
A GAMESMAN.



STILL,
HE'S IN THIS
SOMEHOW. I'D
LIKE TO KNOW...
WHERE HE IS
RIGHT NOW...

...WHAT
THE STAKES
ARE...

THERE.
THERE HE IS.





METRON'S LOG.
ENTRY 51762-ALPHA.
HOLD-SCAN IMBEDDED

THIS IS
GALACTUS.
DESTROYER OF WORLDS.

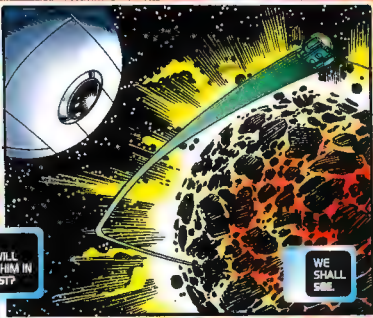
LAST SURVIVOR OF
THE CYCLE OF CREATION
AND DESTRUCTION THAT
COLLAPSED A UNIVERSE
AND BIRTHED A NEW ONE.

A BEING OF COSMIC
INSATIABLE HUNGER,
WHO FEEDS ON THE
LIFE-ENERGY OF
PLANETS, LEAVING
NOTHING BUT DEAD
HUSKS IN HIS WAKE.



KRONA WILL STOP AT
NOTHING--NOTHING--
TO GAIN HIS SECRETS.

THE GAME,
THE RULES WILL
THEY CHECK HIM IN
THE SLIGHTEST?



WE
SHALL
SEE.

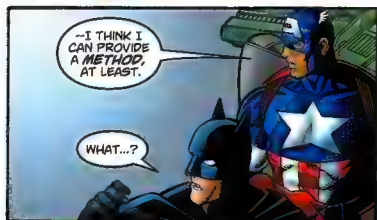


WHATEVER
HIS ROLE, THERE'S
ONE THING WE
CAN'T DO.

WE CAN'T
STOP THE *GAME*. THE
GRANDMASTER LEVIES
DIRE PENALTIES ON
ANYONE WHO QUILTS.
BESIDES...

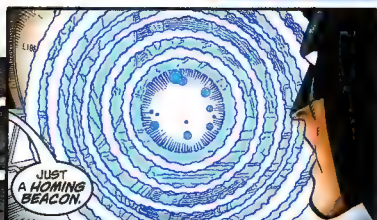
WE NEED
TO KEEP HIS
ATTENTION--AND HIS
OPPONENTS--DIVERTED,
FOCUSED ON THE
GAME, WHILE WE
INVESTIGATE.

ON THAT
FRONT--



--I THINK I
CAN PROVIDE
A METHOD,
AT LEAST.

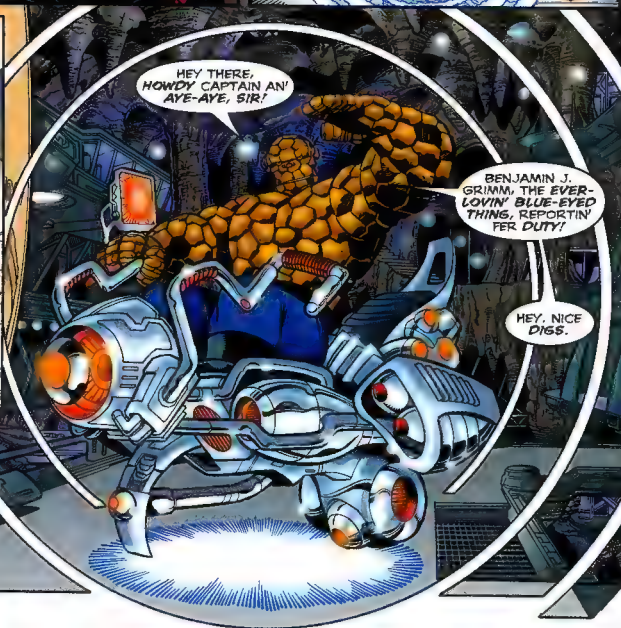
WHAT...?



JUST
A HOMING
BEACON.

I WOULD PREFER THAT
YOU ASK BEFORE
BROADCASTING THE
COORDINATES
OF--

RELAX,
BATMAN--



HEY THERE,
HOWDY CAPTAIN AN'
AYE-AYE, SIR!

BENJAMIN J.
GRIAMM, THE EVER-
LOVIN' BLUE-EYED
THING, REPORTIN'
FER DUTY!

HEY, NICE
DISS.



--THIS IS A FRIEND.

CHECK THIS OUT, CAP-- JUST WHAT YOU ASKED FOR.

REED?

I'VE BEEN ANALYZING THE DATA JAN PIPE OVER, CAPTAIN--



ONE HANDY-DANDY TIME-BIKE, CUSTOMIZED FER KICKIN' AROUND OTHER DIMENSIONS. OH, AN' YOU GOT A CALL.



--AND BASED ON SCANS IRON MAN TOOK OF THE RESIDUE THIS "METRON" LEFT BEHIND AT MONSTER ISLAND--

--I'VE PRE-PROGRAMMED THE TIME-BIKE WITH SOME WAVELENGTHS YOU CAN TRACE.



FROM WHAT THEY TELL ME, YER SUPPOSED TA BE ONE'A THE BLACK HATS, BUT IF YER WITH CAP YER AN OKAY JOE IN MY BOOK.



I'D STAY FER COFFEE, BUT I GOTTA GET BACK. HELP REED AN' SUZIE WITH THE HEAVY LIFTIN'.

YER IDEA A' SMALL CHANGE, HUH?



AH, HERE WE GO.



YOU DON'T NEED ME FER GUMSHOEIN'-- EVEN COSMIC GUMSHOEIN'.

BUT YOU EVER NEED SOME CLOBBERIN' DONE, GIMME A RING. I'M YER MAN.



YOU WERE MORE PREPARED THAN YOU SEEMED.

BEFORE WE CAME TO YOUR WORLD--
--WE SET SOME WHEELS IN MOTION.

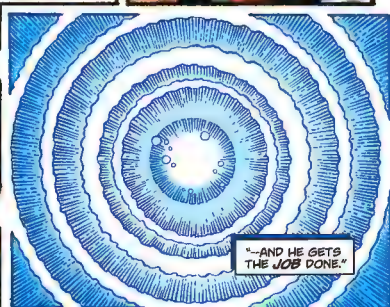


AND THAT WAS ONE OF THEM? HE HAS A... ROUGH-EDGED CHARM.

WAS THAT A KNOCK?

BEN GRIMM MAY NOT BE SLEEK AND ELEGANT, LIKE THE HEROES OVER HERE, MISTER.

BUT HE'S ONE OF THE FINEST MEN I KNOW--



--AND HE GETS THE JOB DONE.

THE HIMALAYAS.

I DON'T
WANNA BE
RUDE...



NO.

I AM... UNDER ASSAULT.
THIS MAGIC... I AM NOT
TRAINED, NOT ATTUNED, NOT
EXPERIENCED ENOUGH...
I... CONTINUE TO ENDURE,
HOWEVER.

WE'RE TOO DEPENDENT
ON MAGIC... MAGIC WE
DON'T UNDERSTAND.
BUT THAT MIGHT
I CAN USE THE
MOTHER BOX...

...MAKE SOME
UNEXPECTED
MOVES.

AND I
WILL CONTINUE
TRYING TO
ACCESS THIS
"SPEED
FORCE"...

FINE.
FINE.

ANY
CHANCE
WE CAN DO IT
SOMEPLACE
WARM,
THOUGH?

I... AM
SHIELDING THOR
AND THE VISION FROM
DETECTION, I THINK, BUT...
IF I TRY TO DO ANYTHING
ELSE, THEY
MAY...

...BUT WHICIE
THERE AN' LOOKIN'
TOO GOOD, ON ME,
THAT'D JUST BE
FROSTBITE,
BUT...

I AGREE,
HAWKEYE.

WANDA? ARE
YOU COPING
ALL RIGHT?

WE'RE DOING
WELL, BUT I DON'T
LIKE THIS... THESE
ITEMS...

...THEY'VE BEEN MOVED,
PLANTED, EVEN SHIFTED FROM
WORLD TO WORLD. WHOEVER'S
BEHIND IT, THEY'RE NOT JUST
COLLECTING THE
ITEMS.

SO IT'S
SOMETHING
ELSE. ONLY ONE
WAY TO FIND
OUT...

ALL RIGHT.
EVERYONE READY?
WAIT...
LET'S GO.

THEY'RE MOVING!
THEY'RE MOVING!
GO! GO!
I'LL
GUIDE
YOU...!

WHADDYA
SAV, CAPTAIN
ATOM...

THE JLA
WATCHTOWER.

...IS IT JUST ME,
OR IS MR. PEEPEES
HERE BOTHERING THE
CHEESE OUT OF
ANYONE ELSE?

NOT JUST
YOU, GREEN
ARROW...

I GOTTA
GO TO THE
BATHROOM.

BUT IF HE
GETS THROUGH
WALLS...

ANY NEWS?

NOT
MUCH, RED
TORNADO.

I'M SENSING
PATTERNS IN THE
CHAOS-MAGIC FIELD--
THE LORDS OF CHAOS ARE
REALLY STIRRED UP. THEY
DON'T KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON--

...BUT IF SHE
DOES ANYTHING,
I'LL KNOW IT.
HAVE THE
TELEPORTERS
WARNED UP...

IF THIS WORKS RIGHT, IT'LL ACT AS
A BATTERY... GATHERING AMBIENT
SPEED FORCE AS YOU RUN...
COLLECTING IT AND
STORING IT...

...AND GIVING
YOU A CHARGE YOU
CAN TAP INTO IF YOU HAVE
TO GO BACK TO THEIR
WORLD.

THANKS,
STEEL.

I HOPE
IT WORKS. I HOPE
ZATANNA FINDS A LEAD ON THEM
FAST, AND I REALLY, REALLY HOPE
I GET THAT POWER BATTERY BACK
BEFORE KYLE FINES OUT...

**HAPPY HARBOR,
RHODE ISLAND.**

THOR! CAN YOU
DISPERSE THIS
CYCLONE?

IT PASSETH
UNDERSTANDING,
VISION--BUT THE STORM
DOETH RESIST MY
CONTROL.

VERY
WELL.

OUR ASSAILANT
SEEMS TO BE AN
ANDROID, LIKE ME. I
SHALL REACH HIM,
INTANGIBLY, AND
SOLIDIFY WITHIN--

--ENDING THE
THREAT AT THE
SOURCE!

WILL
YOU?

HM?

INSIDE HIM?
CIRCUITRY--

--AND SOMETHING
MOOOOORRRRRRRREEEE!

AHA!
THE
MECHANICAL
SHELL DOETH
HIDE AN
ELEMENTAL
TEMPEST
WITHIN!

THEN TRULY,
THOU ART A FIT
FOE FOR THE
MIGHTY TH--
EH?

WHAT?

JUST A GRADE-A,
ALL-PURPOSE ATOMIC
CONTAINMENT SPHERE--
COURTESY OF FIRESTORM,
THE NUCLEAR MAN!

NICE WORK
DISTRACTING THEM
WHILE I GOT THE GOODS,
REDDY! LET'S GET
OUTTA HERE!

AND LET'S FIND A
BIG BELLY BURGER
RESTROOM BEFORE
I BURST!

WAKANDA.

THE BLACK PANTHER
WATCHES AS THEY
BATTLE ON THE STEPS
OF THE ROYAL PALACE.

HIS PALACE.

HIS CITY.

HIS LAND.

HE HAS BEEN AN
AVENGER IN THE PAST,
AND MAINTAINS CLOSE
TIES TO THEM, BUT HE
DOES NOT LIKE OUTSIDE
CONFLICT SPILLING INTO
HIS NATION.

ENOUGH.

WE HAVE LITTLE TIME,
PLASTIC MAN. IF YOU CANNOT
STOP YOUR ASSAILANT--

GNHH!

--THEN
I WILL.

OOH,
HARSH!

AND THAT,
BOYS AND
GIRLS--

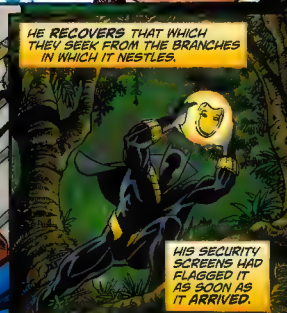
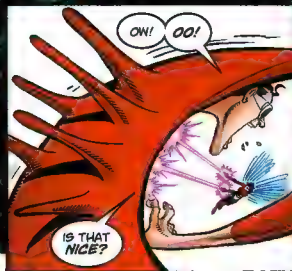
--IS WHY
THE MARTIAN
MANHUNTER STAYS
HOME ON DATE
NIGHTS.

WHAT NEXT,
O MASTER OF
THE MENTAL
WHAMMY?

I CAN
SENSE THE
ARTIFA--
OH.

HE RECOVERS THAT WHICH
THEY SEEK FROM THE BRANCHES
IN WHICH IT NESTLES.

HIS SECURITY
SCREENS HAD
FLAGGED IT
AS SOON AS
IT ARRIVED.





THIS IS
ALL THAT'S LEFT
OF A UNIVERSE?
AN ENTIRE
UNIVERSE?
HOW MANY
LIVES...?

AND THIS
IS A GAME
WE PLAY. A
GAME.

SCANNERS
INDICATE METRON'S
PRESENCE. HE
WAS HERE.
AFTER THE
DESTRUCTION.

THEN
WE HAVE A
TRAIL.



I DON'T BELIEVE IT,
HAWKEYE. YOU STILL
HAVE YOUR LEAD-FOIL
CONTAINMENT ARROW?

YOU NEVER
KNOW WHEN YOU'RE
GONNA RUN INTO THE
RADIOACTIVE MAN,
SHELLHEAD.

STILL, I
JUST SHUT
HIM UP--YOU
SHUT HIM
DOWN.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO
GET BOTH OF 'EM,
THOUGH--I COULDA
TAKEN THAT GREEN
LOUDNOU--HEY!

I AM NOT
GETTING USED
TO THIS.

WE RECOVERED THE
CASSET OF ANCIENT
WITTENBERG. BUT...
THAT'S MORE
IMPORTANT THAN
PROVING WHO'S THE
BETTER ARCHER.

YEAH,
BUT--

JOIN THE FIGHT
WHERE WANDA NEEDS
YOU NEXT. ME--

--I'M GOING TO
SEE WHAT I CAN DO
ELSEWHERE.

BOOM

"4-4."



DENSITY
MANIPULATION.
HMM? WELL, GO AS
DENSE AS YOU
LIKE--I'LL STILL
GO THROUGH
YOU!

I THINK
NOT.

WANDA,
ARE YOU
ALL
RIGHT?

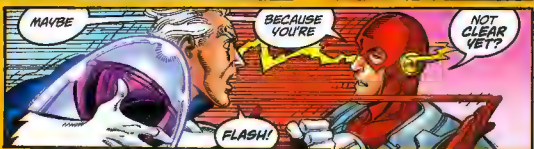
D-D--

DID HE
GET
IT?

D-DID
QUICKSILVER
GET--



I HAVE
IT!
BUT WHY--WHY ISN'T IT
VANISHING?



MAYBE

BECAUSE
YOU'RE

FLASH!

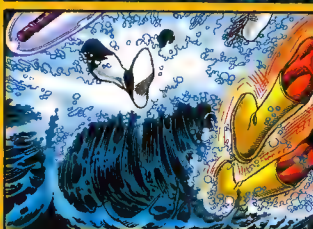
NOT
CLEAR
YET?



I'LL--I'LL REACH
THE SPEED FORCE!
I'LL FIND IT--
BEAT YOU!

SORRY.

LOOK, I ALREADY
SCREWED UP ONCE
TODAY, AND MY BUDDY'S
GONNA BE HACKED OFF
AT ME, SO REALLY, IT'S
NOTHING PERSONAL,
BUT THIS TIME--



I DON'T
LOSE.

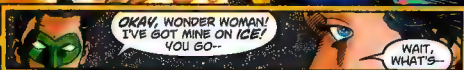
"S-4."



I DON'T
LOSE.

"S-4."

THE BLUE
AREA OF
THE MOON.





WHAT IN--?

GOD,
MOTHER AND
COUNTRY!



THIS--
--THIS
MUST BE THE
GRANDMASTER'S
HOME BASE!
ALL THESE
GAMES!

ALL THIS--
THIS--

I'VE FOUGHT
MEN WITH THIS KIND
OF COMPUSSION BEFORE.
BUT NEVER WITH THIS
SCOPE...

I KNOW
WHAT YOU...
HM?

OH, MAN--
AM I GLAD TO
SEE YOU!



I'LL TELL YOU--

--EVER SINCE I HITCHED A RIDE HERE ON METRON'S CHAIR--

--I'VE BEEN WONDERING IF I'D EVER FIND A WAY OUT!

ATOM?



IN THE SIX-INCH FLESH, BATMAN.

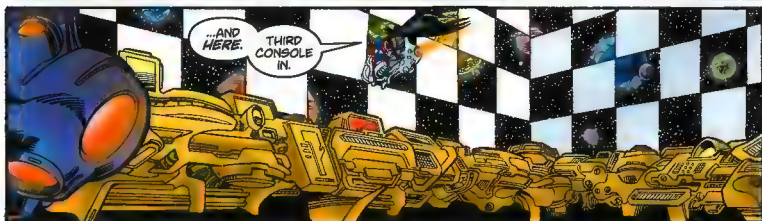
I'LL ASK HOW YOU FOUND THIS PLACE LATER--



--IN THE MEANTIME, I'VE BEEN LOOKING AROUND, AND THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD SEE.

DOWN THIS WAY...

NOW A HARD LEFT BY THE HUNDRED-FOOT-WIDE "HUNGRY HUNGRY HIPPOS" SET WITH WHAT LOOKS LIKE REAL, SATANIC DEMON-HIPPOS...



...AND HERE.

THIRD CONSOLE IN.



IT LOOKS LIKE THIS GRANDMASTER PERSON'S BEEN RECORDING HIS GAME, SO HE CAN RELIVE IT LATER.

I WATCHED HIM AT THE CONTROLS, AND--



TEK

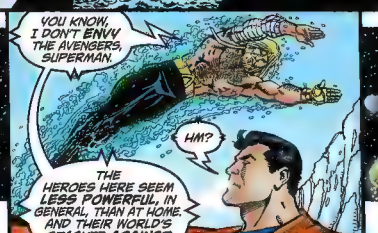
TAK

--THERE! THAT'S WHAT'S RECORDING NOW.



THAT LOOKS LIKE THE FILCHNER ICE SHELF, IN ANTARCTICA.

AND SUPERMAN...



YOU KNOW, I DON'T ENVY THE AVENGERS, SUPERMAN.

HM?

THE HEROES HERE SEEM LESS POWERFUL, IN GENERAL, THAN AT HOME. AND THEIR WORLD'S STACKED AGAINST THEM--



YOU HAVE
INVADED MY DOMAIN,
BESTED MY PARADEMONS,
ABUSED MY PERSONAL
GUARD...AND FOR
WHAT?

UH--

FOR THIS?

DEAR SWEET GOD IN
HEAVEN--THAT'S THE
INFINITY GAUNTLET!
AND THIS GUN--HE LOOKS
WORSE THAN THANOS,
IF THAT'S EVEN
POSSIBLE!

HE COULD
WARP TIME, SPACE,
REALITY--!

MAN, OF
ALL THE TIMES
FOR WANDA TO
DECIDE SHE HAD TO
TAKE HALF OUR
STRENGTH BACK
HOME--!

YES, THIS IS
CLEARLY WHAT
THEY SEEK--

--AND I
CAN FEEL THE
MATRICES OF
POWER WITHIN
THE GEMS.

OUR...OUR INVESTIGATIONS
HAVE BEEN **COMPREHENSIVE**,
LORD DARKSEID...GIVEN THE
TIME CONSTRAINTS.

AND THE GEMS--
THEY DO SEEM DESIGNED
TO AFFECT REALITY,
AND MORE--

--BUT
ANOTHER
REALITY.
THEY DO NOT
FUNCTION
HERE.

BUT
IT SEEMS
DEAD--IT DOES
NOTHING.
WHY IS
THAT?

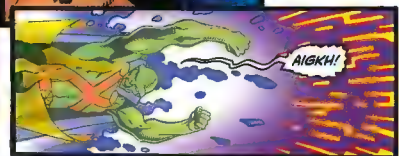
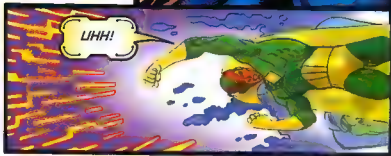
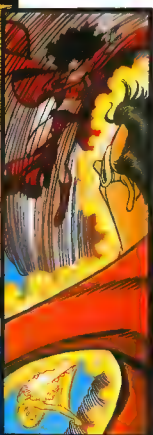
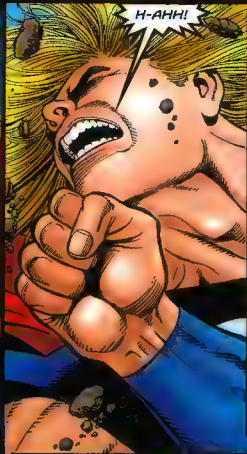
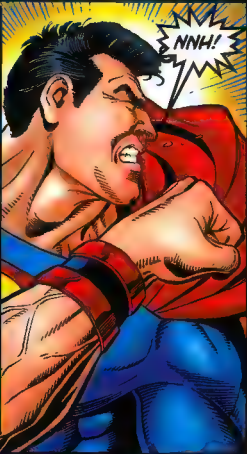
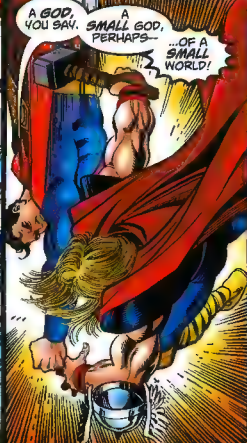
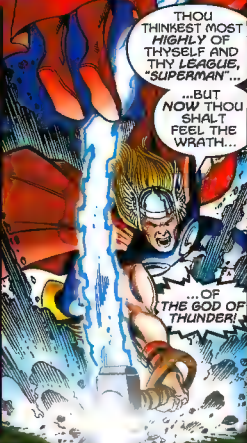
THEN
THIS IS A
WASTE OF MY
TIME.

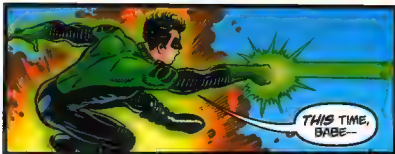




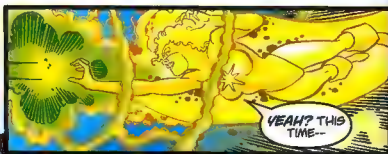
THE SAVAGE LAND.







THIS TIME,
BABE--



YEAH? THIS
TIME--



THOU... ART
STRONG!

BUT THE
MEASURE OF
ANY... BE HE
MAN OR GOD...
IS NOT WHAT
STRENGTH
HE HAS...

...BUT WHAT HE
DOES WITH IT!



TELL YOURSELF
THAT, MISTER... EASE
YOURSELF TO SLEEP AT
NIGHT WHILE YOU LET
YOUR WORLD GO TO
HELL! WHERE I COME
FROM, THOUGH...



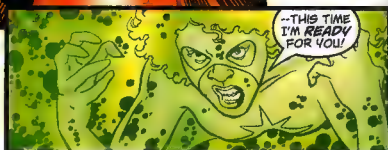
...LIVES
MATTER!

AGHKH!

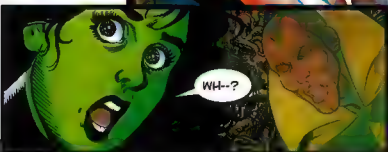
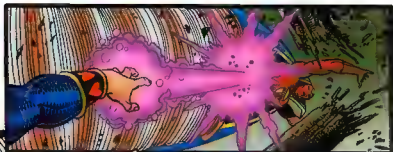


MY
POWER!

YOU'RE--
DRAINING
MY--?



--THIS TIME
I'M READY
FOR YOU!

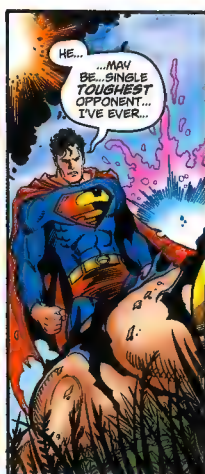




HE--



THOR--



HE...
...MAY
BE...SINGLE
TOUGHEST
OPPONENT...
I'VE EVER...



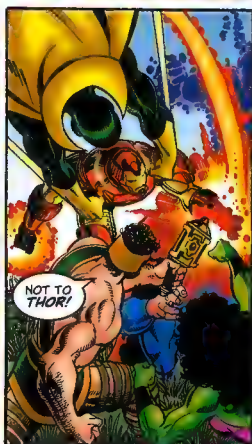
UHH!



YOU
DONT--

--DONT DO
THAT--

NOT TO
HIM!



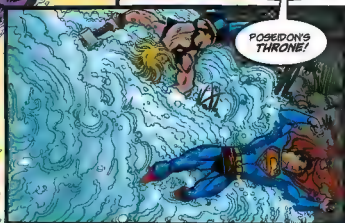
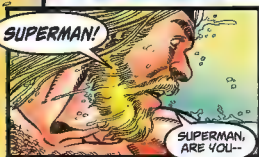
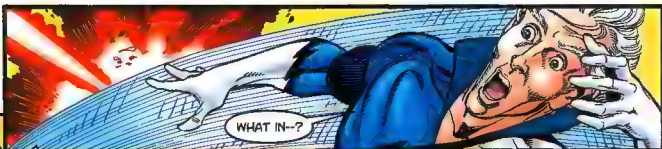
NOT TO
THOR!



HERA!



WHAT--?





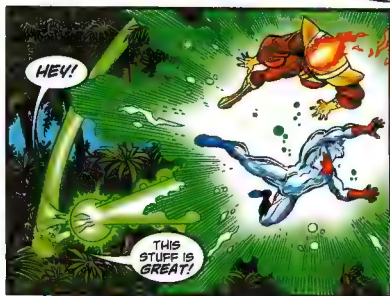
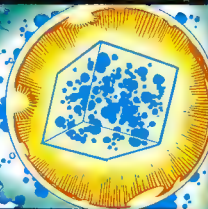
WHOA!

BRIGHTEST
DAYBLACKEST
NIGHTYEVILSHALL
ESCAPE
M'RIGHT...

C'MON, BABY,
HOLD TOGETHER,
YOU CAN DO IT...HAL'S
OATH'LL....



THOSE
WHY WORSHIP EVIL'S
MIGHT...



HEY!

THIS
STUFF IS
GREAT!



OH, NO!
WARBIRD, I
NEED YOU!

I-- I-- WOO.

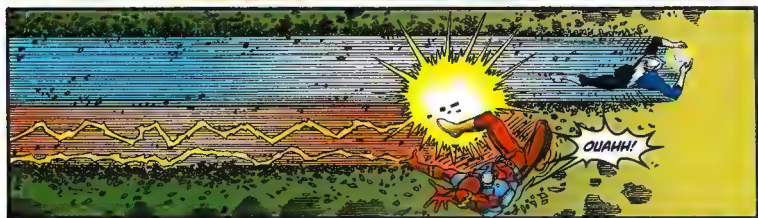
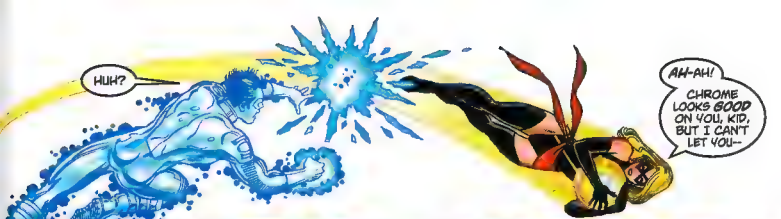


NO...WONDER
THEY'RE ALL SO
IMPRESSED BY THAT
THING, THE COSMIC
CUBE, HUH?

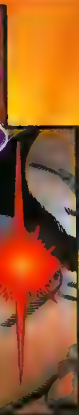
I JUST
THOUGHT IT WAS A
POWER SOURCE, BUT
MAN! THAT'S SOME
SERIOUS MOJO!



OKAY,
TIME TO--









SUPERMAN...?

I'LL
I'LL LIVE

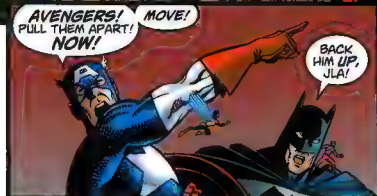
I THINK



WHO
IS IT?

WHO
IS IT THAT
KNOWS?

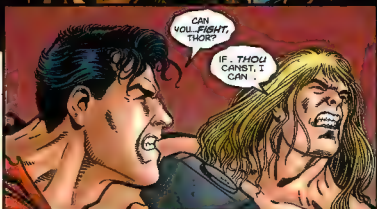
TELL ME!
TELL ME, OR
I'LL--



AVENGERS!
PULL THEM APART!
NOW!

MOVE!

BACK
HIM UP,
JLA!



CAN
YOU FIGHT,
THOR?

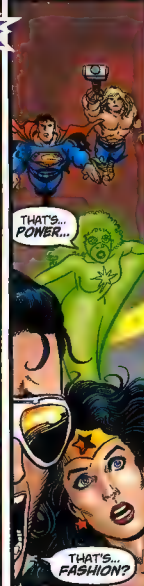
IF THOU
CANST, I
CAN



I SEE IT--
SEE IT IN YOUR
MIND!



GALACTUS!



THAT'S...
POWER...

THAT'S...
FASHION?



WHAT IS THE
MEANING OF THIS
OUTRAGE?

GALACTUS!



TELL
ME THE
TRUTH!

TELL
ME YOUR
SECRETS!

TELL
ME NOW--TELL ME
IMMEDIATELY--



YOU ARE
CLEARLY A
MADMAN.
AND GALACTUS
DOES NOT DEAL
WITH MAD--



NNNN



YOU
WILL TELL
ME!



YOU
WILL TELL
ME!

IF I HAVE
TO TEAR YOU
APART AND RIP
THE SECRET FROM
YOUR BROKEN
CORPSE--



HIS ENERGY
BARRIERS--

YES--THEY DEFEY
EVEN INTANGIBLE
FORMS--



YOU

WILL
TELL
ME!

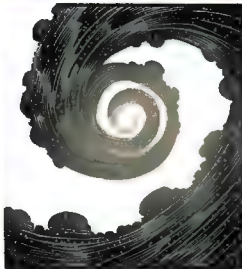
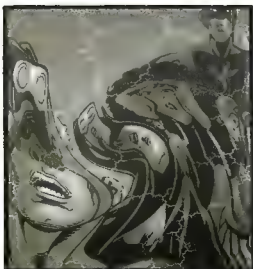
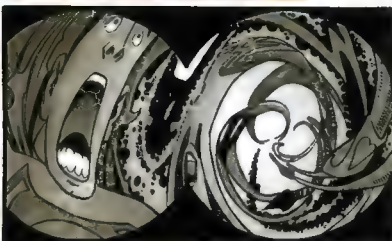
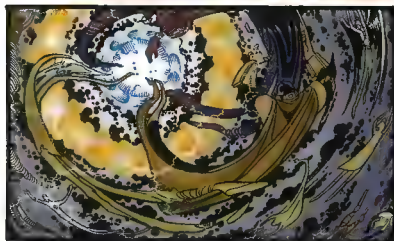
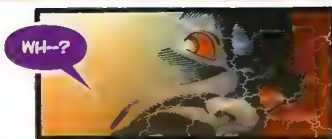
N..NO, KRONA... ..HE..WILL NOT.



ALL TOGETHER!
CONCENTRATE!



NNNN









PROLOGUE:

BEYOND ALL CONVENTIONAL TIME
AND SPACE, THERE IS A WALL. A
WALL THAT GUARDS UNIMAGINABLE
POWER AND MYSTERY.

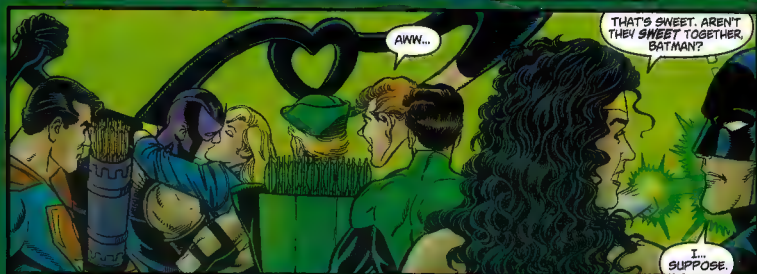
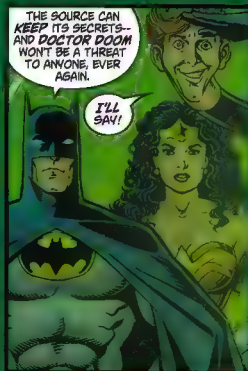
A WALL ENCRUSTED WITH
THE GARGANTUAN HUSKS
OF THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT
TO PENETRATE IT, AND FAILED.

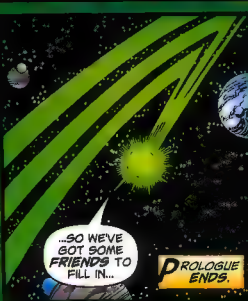
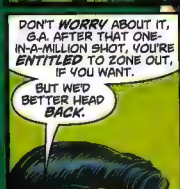
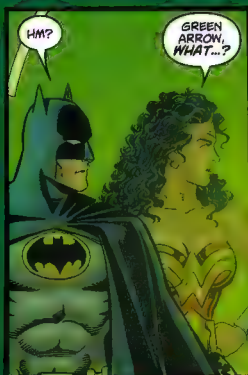
AND TODAY...

...ANOTHER STILL,
UNMOVING FORM
HAS JOINED THE
SILENT GIANTS.

AND
THAT, IT
SEEMS, IS
THAT.

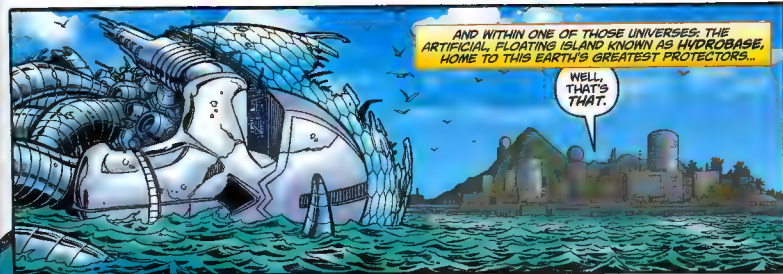






...there
were two
Universes.

BOOK
THREE: **STRANGE
ADVENTURES**





HEY, HANK! JAN!

THE WASP SAID THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH UNIVERSE-SHIFTING HERE ON EARTH-TWO, AVENGERS.

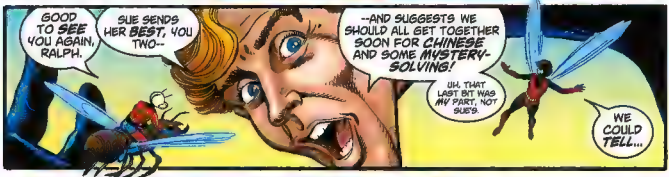
WE'VE HAD A LITTLE OF THAT OURSELVES, SO...



SO IT'S TIME TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER AGAIN, HM?

ONE THING WRONG THOUGH, HAL--YOU'RE EARTH-TWO. WE'RE EARTH-ONE.

YEAH, YEAH...



GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, RALPH.

SUE SENDS HER BEST, YOU TWO--

--AND SUGGESTS WE SHOULD ALL GET TOGETHER SOON FOR CHINESE AND SOME MYSTERY-SOLVING!

UH, THAT LAST BIT WAS MY PART, NOT SUE'S.

WE COULD TELL...



HEY, OTHER HANK!

...OUR NEW PARTICLE ACCELERATOR, BARRY...

DOOM?

WHY THANK YOU, THOR!



HM. I DON'T... DON'T LIKE THIS...

LADIES, GENTLEMEN, WELCOME.

I'M HAVING HORS D'OEUVRES PREPARED.



THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, JARVIS. THIS IS BUSINESS, NOT PLEASURE.

HEY, RALPH!

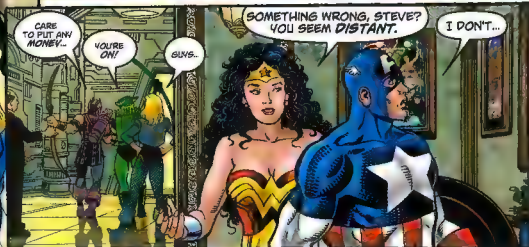
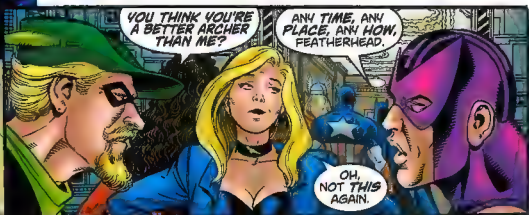


LOOK AT THAT. THE FATCAT EX-MUNITIONS DEALERS HIRED THUS TAKES CHARGE, ORDERING THE HELP AROUND LIKE SLAVES...

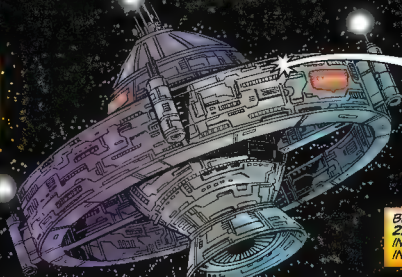
WHAT?!

I HEAR YOU RIGHT, MOLDY ARROW? YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THE AVENGERS?

NO, NO...



CAPTAIN AMERICA
SHAKES HIS HEAD.
BLINKS HIS EYES.
WASN'T HE JUST--
SOMEWHERE ELSE?
SOMEWHERE....



GO!

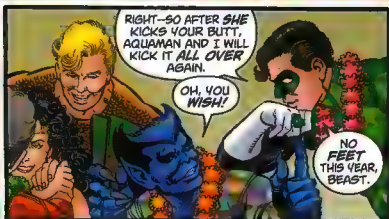
GO!

GO!

BUT NO. HE'S IN A SATELLITE,
22,300 MILES ABOVE EARTH,
IN GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT.
IN JLA HEADQUARTERS.



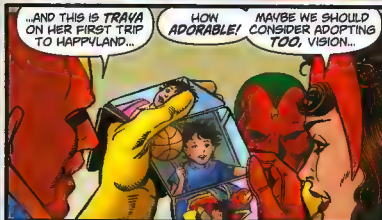
C'MON, SIMON, SHE
WINS EVERY YEAR!
FINISH UP--TIME FOR
OUR ANNUAL PING PONG
SUDDEN-DEATH
GRUDGE MATCH!



RIGHT--SO AFTER SHE
KICKS YOUR BUTT,
AQUAMAN AND I WILL
KICK IT ALL OVER
AGAIN.

OH, YOU
WISH!

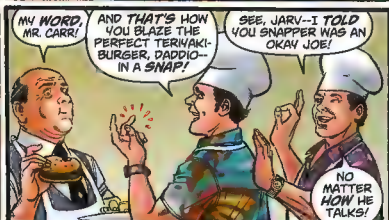
NO
FEET
THIS YEAR,
BEAST.



...AND THIS IS TRAVA
ON HER FIRST TRIP
TO HAPPYLAND...

HOW
ADORABLE!

MAYBE WE SHOULD
CONSIDER ADOPTING
TOO, VISION...

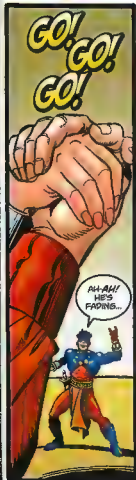


MY WORD,
MR. CARR!

AND THAT'S HOW
YOU BLAZE THE
PERFECT TERWAKI-
BURGER, DADDIO--
IN A SNAP!

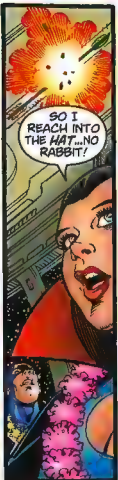
SEE, JARV--I TOLD
YOU SNAPPER WAS AN
OKAY JOE!

NO
MATTER
HOW HE
TALKS!



GO! GO!
GO!

AAAH! HE'S
FADING...



SO I REACH INTO
THE HAT...NO
RABBIT!



KEEP YOUR HANDS--
AND YOUR INCREDIBLY
DISGUSTING
THOUGHTS--
AWAY FROM ME,
GARDNER!
UNDERSTOOD?

I OBEY...

GO!
GO!

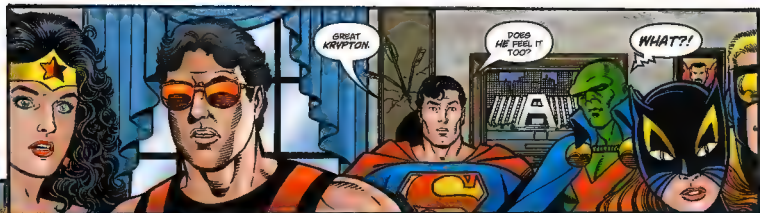


THY LEAGUE HATH
MOUNTED AN
ELABORATE FEAST
INDEED, SUPERMAN.
THOU MUST BE
PLEASED.

WHO ARE YOU,
THOR?

WHO
ARE ANY OF
YOU?





"--AND WE HAD TO SWAP WORLDS TO ESCAPE, AND TRACK THEM DOWN?"



"REMEMBER WHEN
THE GRIM REAPER
AND THE KEY HAD
THE SERPENT CROWN?"

"WHEN THEY
KIDNAPPED
MANTIS AND
ZATANNA--

"...TRIED TO USE
THEM AS SOME
SORT OF KEY
TO CELESTIAL
POWER?"

"REMEMBER KANG
AND THE
LORD OF TIME?"



"BATTLING EACH
OTHER? THE QUEST
FOR THE CHRONAL
EGG?"

"I...REMEMBER
FIGHTING...
A QUEST..."

BELOW, IN THE AVENGERS' COMM-ROOM.



WHATEVER'S GOING ON, IT'S **NOT** THE MASTERS OF EVIL.

THEY'RE STILL SECURE IN THE DIMENSIONAL VOID.

AND MOST OF OUR OTHER NOTEWORTHY ENEMIES ARE ACCOUNTED FOR...

BREETEEET BREETEEET BREETEEET BREETEEET B



HM?

IRON MAN! BATMAN!

GET UP HERE-- NOW!



WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING--

CAP--

IT'S YOU! YOU'RE THE WORST OF THEM! BENDING REALITY, FOULING THE AIR--

YOU'RE THE ONE!

ME?!

KAL....



ADMIT IT, "CAPTAIN AMERICA!" DROP YOUR PHONY, SANCTIMONIOUS POSE AND TELL US THE TRUTH--

--OR I'LL SHAKE IT OUT OF YOU!

HUH? WHAT'S WITH THEM?

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

OH BOY...



COME ON, THEN! DO YOUR WORST! YOU'RE JUST ONE MORE OVER-MUSCLED HIGH-AND-MIGHTY PRETTY BOY!

I'VE BEATEN DOZENS LIKE YOU IN MY TIME!



AND WITH AN IRRATIONAL
SNARL, A VIOLENT HEAVE
OF TWO PAIRS OF SHOULDERS
THEY SHRUG OFF THOSE
RESTRAINING THEM--

I'LL--

YOU--

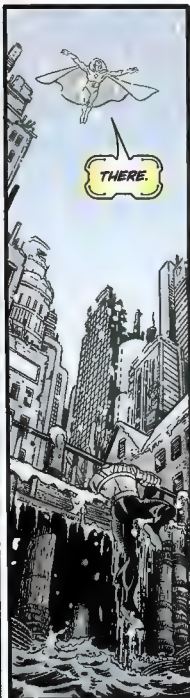
OH,
GOD.

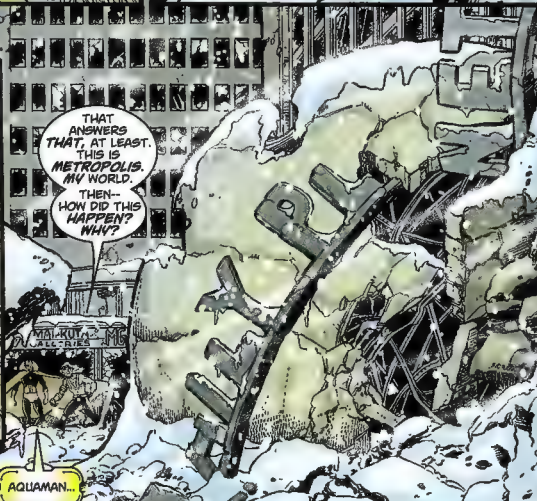
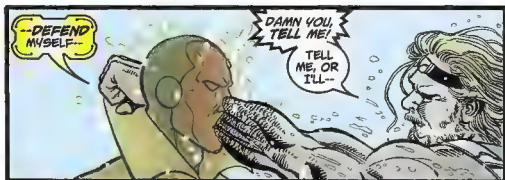
AND THEY COME TOGETHER
IN A SOUNDLESS IMPACT--
A CLAP OF SILENCE THAT
OVERWHELMS THE SENSES--

--BLINDING,
DEAFENING,
NUMBING--

AND THEN
EVERYTHING--

--GOES--







THIS AIN'T
YOUR WORLD,
HEROES! NOT
NO MORE!

THE
MASTER SAID
YOU'D TURN
UP--

--AN' THE
MASTER SAID YOU
GOTTA DIE!



I HAVE INCREASED
MY DENSITY TO
SHIELD YOU FROM
THEIR ATTACKS.

BUT WE ARE BADLY
OUTNUMBERED.
LOGIC WOULD
SUGGEST WE
RETREAT, BUT--

RUN?



DO AS YOU
LIKE, VISION--
BUT THE KING OF
ATLANTIS DOES
NOT RUN!

THESE
MISCREANTS
HAVE A
MASTER--

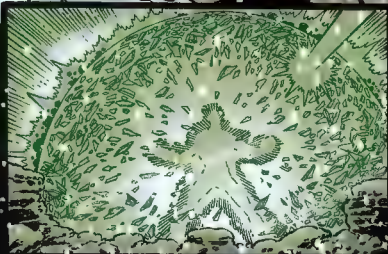
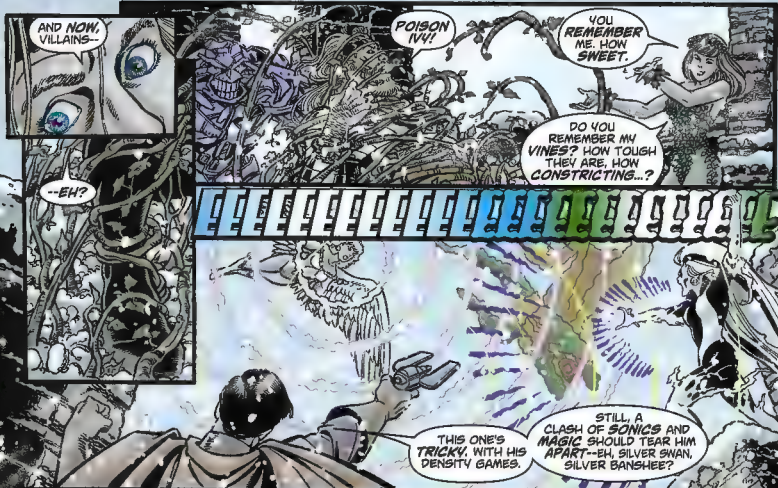
UHH!

--AND I
WANT THAT
MASTER'S
NAME!



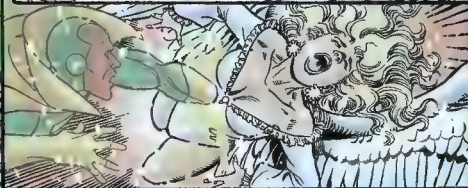
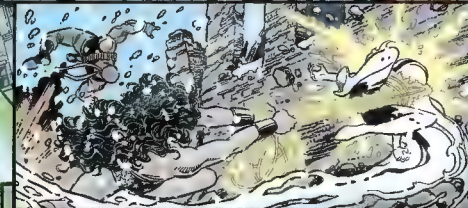
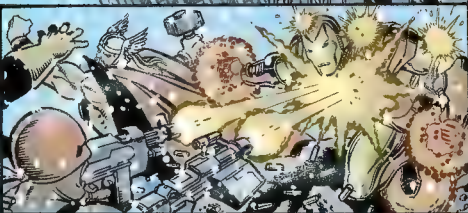
PRECISELY WHAT
I WAS LEADING
UP TO, AQUAMAN.

HEV!

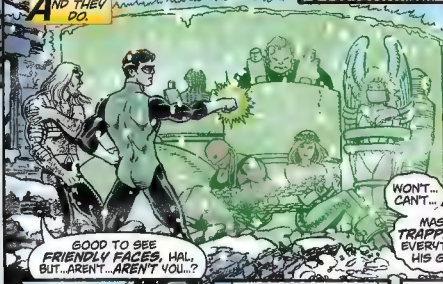




AVENGERS,
LEAGUERS--
--TAKE
THEM
DOWN.



AND THEY
DO.



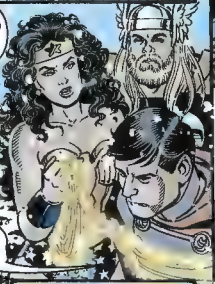
GOOD TO SEE
FRIENDLY FACES, HAL,
BUT...AREN'T...AREN'T YOU...?

THE TRUTH,
SONAR, MY LASSO
COMPELS YOU.
WHO IS YOUR
MASTER?

WON'T...
CAN'T...

MASTER...
TRAPPED...HAD
EVERYTHING IN
HIS GRASP...

BUT HE'LL
ESCAPE...



I...DON'T
KNOW. WE
SHOULD GET
BACK TO H.Q.,
FIGURE THINGS...
HUH?
THE MOON'S
DAMAGED...
BUT WHY DID I
THINK OF THE
MOON?

I DID, AS
WELL...



KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, IRON
MAN, AND YOUR SENSORS
DEPLOYED.

THEY ACT
TRUSTWORTHY, BUT
THERE'S STILL SOMETHING
WRONG WITH THIS
PLACE, SOMETHING
ALIEN...



LEAVE OFF, AMAZON.
I HAVE THE ANSWER. THEY
ARE ALL TOUCHED
BY POWER--THEIR
MASTERS, NO DOUBT.

MIGHTY
MJOLNIR CAN
SENSE THAT
POWER--

--AND
FOLLOW
IT!



HMM. THE HEROES OF
TWO WORLDS WOUND
UP SCATTERED HERE,
ACROSS METROPOLIS.
I WONDER--

"...IS THE SAME TRUE
AT HOME, ON THE
AVENGERS' EARTH?"

MOVE,
MOVE!

WITH THESE
EARTHQUAKES,
IF THIS FIRE
ISN'T OUT IN
MINUTES--!

GOOD.
THEN ONE
MORE TRIP
SHOULD
DO IT.

THERE'S A
FIELD CLINIC
TWO BLOCKS
SOUTH, BATMAN!
THEY CAN TAKE
CARE OF--

ON IT,
SUPERMAN!
ONLY ONE
MORE SET OF
EVACUEES
IN THIS
BLOCK!

I SAW IT,
GOLIATH. I'LL
GET HER
THERE.

I
APPRECIATE...
THAT THIS IS DELICATE
WORK, SCARLET
WITCH. BUT...IF YOU
COULD BE...A LITTLE
FASTER?

WE'LL
BE CLEAR
IN THREE
SECONDS!
TWO!

CAN'T
UNDERSTAND IT...
WHY AM I SUDDENLY
SO SLOW?!

DOING MY
BEST, MARTIAN
MANHUNTER!



MY APOLOGIES.
I HAVE A PROBLEM
WITH FIRE.

IT DIDN'T SHOW, J'ONN.
AND WE GOT EVERYONE
OUT. THAT'S WHAT
COUNTS.

MY--MY
LEGS--



HMP.
SOMETHING
STRANGE
WITH THE
AIR PRESSURE--
SUNLIGHT FEELS
GREASY, ACIDIC--
PEOPLE'S
HEARTBEATS
ARE TOO
FAST--



SUPERMAN!

YOU WANT
SOMETHING,
WASP?

UH...JUST THAT
THERE'S GOT TO
BE SOMEONE
BEHIND THIS.
THE QUAKES,
THE FIRES--
MANHATTAN'S
BUILT ON
BEDROCK.
IF YOU'LL
JOIN THE REST
OF US...



FINE. WE'RE IN THE
AVENGERS' WORLD. OUR
MEMORIES ARE HAZY. BARRY
IS THE FLASH, WHICH
SEEMS ODD, BUT I'M
NOT SURE WHY.

YOU
AVENGERS
MAY HAVE
SIMILAR
CONCERNS.

WHAT
NEXT?



SUPERMAN,
THERE'S NO NEED
TO BE SO--



AVENGERS--
HELP US!

THIS
DEVASTATION--
IT'S BEEN
DAYS!

WHAT
CAUSED
IT?

NORRIED
ABOUT MY SISTER--
CAN'T CALL THROUGH
TO KEYSTONE--

WHEN
WILL YOU
FIX IT?

MARTIAN
MANHUNTER--

FLASH--



SUPERMAN!
YOU I RECOGNIZE,
AT LEAST!

I AM FROM
QURAC! I DRIVE A
CAB HERE MANY
YEARS!

THESE
PEOPLE SAY MY
HOMELAND DON'T
EXIST. CALL ME
CRAZY! TELL
THEM!

WH--?



HMM. IF THERE'S NO QURAC
IN YOUR WORLD, THEN
SOME OF THESE PEOPLE
ARE FROM MY WORLD.
THEY'RE CROSSING
OVER.

IF WE FIND
THE EPICENTER
OF THE QUAKES, WE
MIGHT FIND THE MAN
BEHIND THEM.



I'D DO A SPEED-SWEEP OF
THE CITY, BUT MY POWERS SEEM
TO BE FADING. I'LL REST
FOR A MINUTE, SEE IF
IT HELPS.

HEY,
LOOK--

IT'S
SNOWING.
THAT'LL HELP
WITH THE
FIRES...



NO! NO, NOT THE SNOW! NOT THE SNOW!

WH--?

YOU DON'T KNOW-- DON'T KNOW WHAT THE SNOW DOES!



LEAGUERS! AVENGERS! THE SKY!

IT'S STARTING!
THE SNOW-- IT BRINGS THE GHOSTS BACK! THE GHOSTS--



THE AIR GOES ELECTRIC.

THE WIND PICKS UP.

IT'S SUDDENLY COLDER, DARKER, AND THERE'S A MURMURING--A MURMURING THAT BUILDS, UNTIL--



HELP US!
PLEASE--HELP US!

WH-WHAT--?!

THE GHOSTS! THE GHOSTS!

IT'S SUPERMAN! BUT HE'S ALL--

PLEASE--PLEASE!

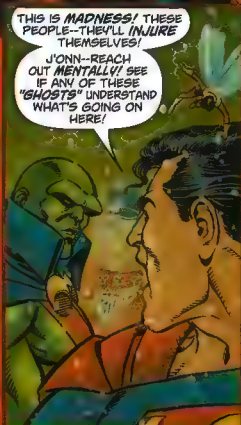
YOU'RE HEROES! YOU GOTTA-GOTTA--



NO!

WHAT-- BUT--

DON'T LET THEM TAKE ME! DON'T--DON'T LET--



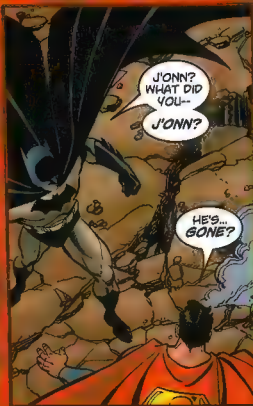
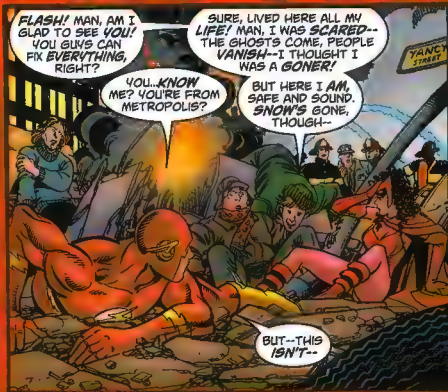
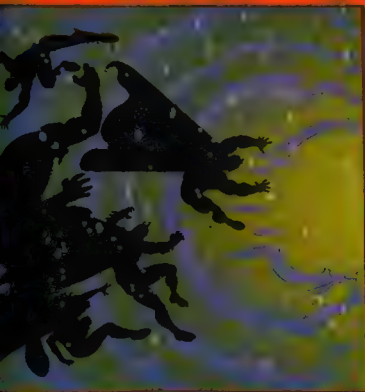
THIS IS MADNESS! THESE PEOPLE--THEY'LL INJURE THEMSELVES!

J'ONN--REACH OUT MENTALLY! SEE IF ANY OF THESE "GHOSTS" UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!



VERY WELL.

I FEEL THEIR MINDS, BUT THEY ARE THIN--AS IF FAR AWAY, OR...OR...





I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THAT SKY...

THE SIGNAL DOTH COME FROM THIS DIRECTION, MY COMRADES.

BUT THIS STORM--I HAVE QUELLED ITS FULL FURY, RENDERING IT NAUGHT BUT GENTLE SNOW. STILL, THERE DOTH BE SOMETHING MORE-- SOMETHING UNNATURAL, HOSTILE...

VISION! DOST THOU SEE ANYTHING?



THERE IS SOMETHING AHEAD--

--BUT I CAN'T QUITE-- CAN'T--



WHAT?!

THE PEOPLE IN THE BUILDINGS AROUND THEM-- THEY JUST VANISHED! I CAN'T HEAR THEM ANYMORE-- ANY OF THEM!

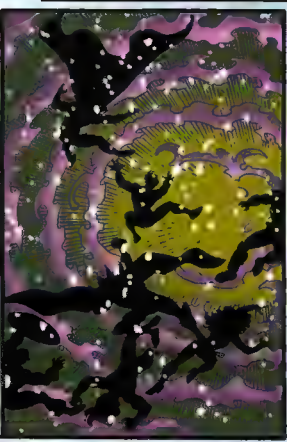


IT'S GETTING HOTTER-- WARMING UP FAST, AS IF WE'RE NEAR A FIRE--

AND THAT SOUND-- WHAT'S THAT SOUND?



WATCH THYSELVES, ALL OF YOU! AN ENERGY-SURGE--



HUH? THE PEOPLE-- THEY'RE BACK! AND WITH THEM...

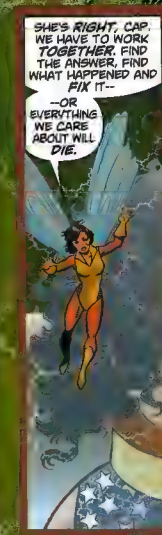
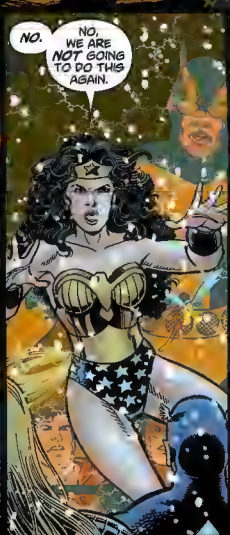
THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER?

WHY... WHY IS IT SO SNOWY?



YES, IRON MAN. AND I BELIEVE I KNOW SOMETHING OF WHAT IS HAPPENING... THOUGH I STILL DO NOT KNOW WHY.







THE CRACKED
PAVEMENT
CONVULSES
BENEATH THEM--
THE AIR GOES HOT,
THEN COLD--

--AND THE
RIFT ERUPTS
UPWARD WITH
A DEAFENING
ROAR--A ROAR
OF RAGE, OF
VEARNING--

WHAT
IN--?



ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT,
SCARLET
WITCH?

OH!
YOU'RE
BACK!
BUT--

THAT FACE--
IT'S CAUSING THIS
SOMEHOW! LOOK
AT THE SKY!



THE
STORM--IT'S
STARTING
AGAIN!

AND THE
GROUND SHAKES--
STRONGER THAN
E'ER BEFORE!

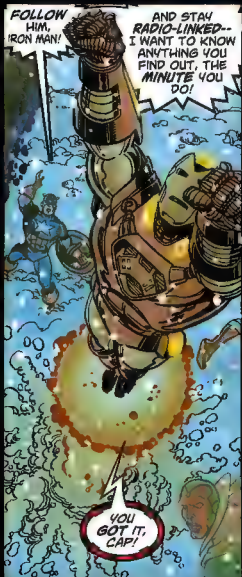


OH,
NO.

I
THINK--



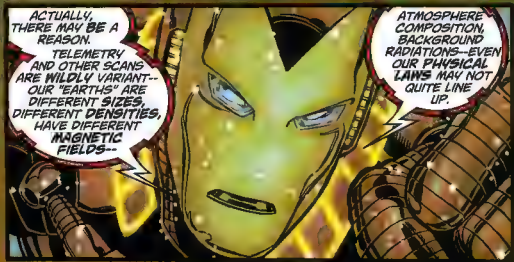
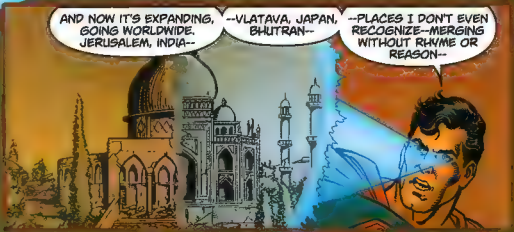
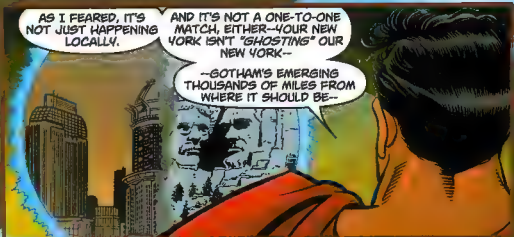
--I THINK
I KNOW WHAT'S
HAPPENING!



FOLLOW
HIM,
IRON MAN!

AND STAY
RADIO-LINKED--
I WANT TO KNOW
ANYTHING YOU
FIND OUT, THE
MINUTE YOU
DO!

YOU
GOT IT,
CAP!





IT--IT'S NOT
EVEN POSSIBLE!
I CAN'T BE
SEEING
THIS!

I JUST
CAN'T!

YOU'RE
NOT--NOT
LITERALLY. IT'S OUR
MINDS...TRYING TO
COMPREHEND, TO
PROCESS WHAT WE'RE
WITNESSING IN A
WAY WE CAN
GRASP.

BUT IT'S
REAL--EVEN
SO, IT'S
REAL--



THE WORLDS
ARE MERGING--
BEING FORCED
TOGETHER! BUT
THEIR NATURES--
THEY'RE TOO
DIFFERENT--

AND THE
MORE THEY COME
TOGETHER--

--THE MORE
THEY TEAR
EACH OTHER
APART!



THE FACE--
KRONA LOOKS
ALMOST--
JUBILANT--!

DON'T KNOW
WHY--OR HOW--
HE'S DOING
THIS--



--BUT MAYBE--
I CAN **DISRUPT**
THE PROCESS--
KEEP THE WORLDS
APART--



YOU
HURT HIM,
WANDA!



CAN YOU DO IT,
SCARLET WITCH?
ARE YOU--

I...
NUDGED
HIM A LITTLE...
I THINK...
BUT...

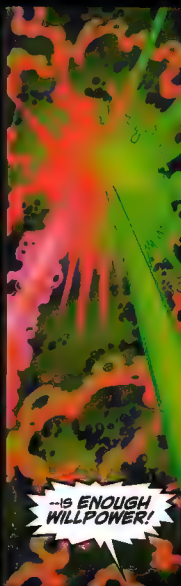
HE'S TOO...
POWERFUL...
TOO STRONG...
PUSHING...
PUSHING
ME...



JUST HANG TIGHT,
LADY--YOU'RE NOT
ALONE IN THIS!

YOU'VE
OPENED THE
DOOR A
CRACK--

--SO
ALL WE
NEED--



--IS ENOUGH
WILLPOWER!



MAN, HE
IS STRONG,
ISN'T HE?

CHAOS MAGIC AND
EMERALD ENERGY
LANCE HEAVENWARD--
THE BUZZ BECOMES
AN ANGRY HOWL--

--AND GREEN LANTERN AND THE
SCARLET WITCH FIND A FORCE
IN THEIR MINDS--ASSAILING
THEM, OVERPOWERING THEM--

THEY
REACH
OUT--

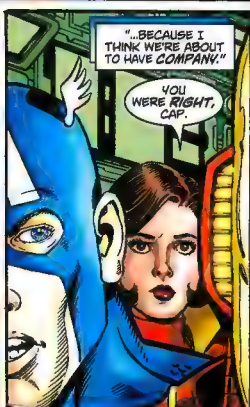
--TAPPING
THEIR
TEAMMATES
WILLS--

--THEIR
POWER--

--THEIR
SOULS!

THEY GIVE
WILLINGLY--
EVERYTHING
THEY HAVE--

--UNTIL--



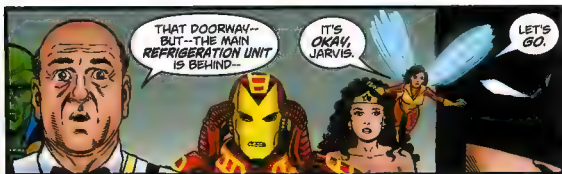




BUT NOT HEARING.
CAPTAIN AMERICA. EVEN
NOW, THE SANDS OF TIME
RUN SWIFTLY.

JUST
FOLLOW ME.
IF YOU WOULD
FOLLOW...

...A
STRANGER.



WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
WHERE ARE WE?

STAY ON
THE PATH,
DOCTOR
PYM.

SHOULD YOU
STRAY FROM IT,
YOU WILL NEVER
FIND YOUR WAY
BACK...

...NOR WILL
ANY WHO KNOW
YOU EVER SEE
YOUR FACE
AGAIN.





THIS IS--

MY SENSORS--
HAYWIRE--

TRUST
ME, IRON
MAN--

--THOSE OF US
WHO HAVE TO RELY ON
BIOLOGICAL SENSES
AREN'T ANY BETTER OFF

I WONDER,
BARRY--

IF REALITY'S CHANGING AROUND
US, HOW DO WE KNOW ANYTHING?
ARE WE EVEN HERE? ARE WE
WHO WE'RE SUPPOSED
TO BE?

SORRY, HALL--
BUT THAT'S WHY TOO
METAPHYSICAL FOR AN
IOWA BOY LIKE ME.
LET'S JUST DO
THE JOB--

--AND GO
HOME TO
OUR LOVED
ONES.



AND NOW,
JUSTICE LEAGUE,
AVENGERS--

NON, NOTHING,
STRANGER!

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO
TELL US WHERE WE'RE
GOING, WHAT WE'RE DOING--
OR NOBODY GOES A
STEP FURTHER!



DO AS
YOU WISH,
BATMAN.
IN ANY
EVENT--



--WE ARE
HERE.

THE
GRANDMASTER!

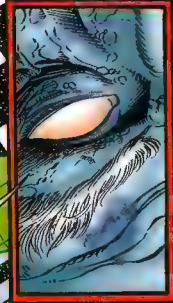
BUT--
HE'S WOUNDED--
SO STILL--!

IS HE--?

N-NO--
CAPTAIN AMERICA...
I LIVE, BUT...
BARBLY...

I HAVE
MADE A MOST
SERIOUS
ERROR...

I DIDN'T...
EXPECT KRONA...
SO RUTHLESS. HE
LEFT ME, FOR DEAD...
ATTACKED GALACTUS.
I CALLED ON...
POWER OF
ARTIFACTS...





"...USED IT...TO BIND
UNIVERSES TOGETHER



"...TRAPPED KRONA
AT JUNCTURE POINT...
BETWEEN THEM."



I GAMBLER...KRONA
WOULD NOT...DESTROY
UNIVERSES...IF HIS FATE...
TIED TO THEM AS
WELL.

BUT...UNIVERSES
FUNDAMENTALLY
INCOMPATIBLE...
NATURES TOO...
DIFFERENT...



SOME OF
YOU...AFFECTED...SO
STRONGLY ATTUNED
TO YOUR TRUE
REALITIES...

...SENSING
CHANGES...
MAKING YOU EDGY,
UNEASY...

MEMORIES...
FIGHTING TO SURFACE...
STRAIN...CAUSED
DISRUPTIONS...



BUT THE
PROBLEM'S
GETTING
WORSE--

YES, UNIVERSES...OVERLOADING
ONE ANOTHER...EACH...COMPLETE
UNTO ITSELF...BUT FORCED TOGETHER...
BUILDING TO DANGEROUS...
CRITICAL MASS.

AND IT...IS
KRONA...MAKING
IT HAPPEN.



WORSE, KRONA IS...
ACCELERATING...
PROCESS.

HE STOLE...
KNOWLEDGE FROM
GALACTUS...KNOWS
GALACTUS...
SURVIVED BIG
BANG...



HE PLANS TO...REPEAT
PROCESS. HE WILL...BRING
WORLDS TOGETHER, LET
THEM...ANNIHILATE EACH
OTHER, CAUSING NEW
BIG BANG...

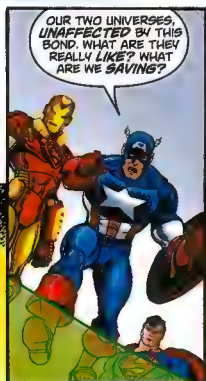
...ONE HE CAN
EXPERIENCE, IF HE
SURVIVES...LEARN ITS
SECRETS.

UNFORTUNATELY,
KRONA...ONLY TOO
WILLING TO RISK ALL
TO LEARN TRUTH...
ALWAYS...HAS
BEEN.



CAN'T YOU JUST--
SEPARATE THE
UNIVERSES
AGAIN?

YOU
BROUGHT
THEM
TOGETHER,
AFTER
ALL.



--AND THEIR MINDS
ARE SUDDENLY FILLED--

--WITH A CASCADE
OF IMAGES,
SOUNDS, EVENTS--

IN THE SPAN OF A FEW
HEARTBEATS, THEY
WITNESS YEARS--

--OF TRIUMPH
AND TRAGEDY,
GLORY AND PAIN--

THEY SEE EVIL
THWARTED, SEE
NATIONS FALL--

--SEE ENEMIES
PROSPER,
FRIENDS DIE--

--SEE HOPE
DASHED, AND
HOPE REBORN--

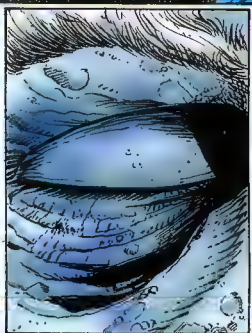
--SEE LOVE
AND ANGER
AND SACRIFICE
AND TERROR--

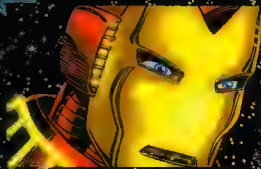
AND STILL IT
COMES, STILL
IT COMES--











THEN--

WE DECIDE.



I THINK HE **KNEW**--IT WOULDN'T BE UP TO HIM ANY MORE. BUT THOSE **WORLDS**--WHAT WE **SAW**--



I THINK WE **KNOW**--WE WON'T ALL **LIVE** TO RETIRE. IF THAT'S WHAT IT **TAKES**--



WE **DID** LEAVE LEGACIES--BUT--BUT WHAT I **DID**--



LOOK, HAL, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF DEFEATING KRONA WILL **FIX** THINGS.

MAYBE THERE'S ANOTHER WAY.



OH, JAN--IF THERE **IS**--

I'D DO ANYTHING TO MAKE WHAT WE **SAW**--TO MAKE IT **NOT** HAPPEN. JUST A BAD DREAM, A NIGHTMARE--



I KNOW, HANK. I KNOW.



IF WE **STABILIZE** THE WORLDS THE WAY THEY ARE--**SEPARATE** THE UNIVERSES, REBUILD FROM THERE--

OH, GOD, YES!

I COULD TAKE **DVING**--MADNESS, DISFIGUREMENT, ANYTHING! BUT...BUT I **SAW** CHILDREN! I **SAW** OUR CHILDREN! AND I **LOST** THEM...



THERE **MUST** BE ANOTHER WAY! **MUST** BE...

I KNOW, WANDA, I **KNOW**. I **SAW** MYSELF GO MAD, MURDER FRIENDS.

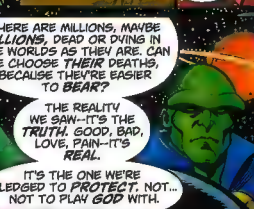
BUT THERE **ISN'T** ANOTHER WAY. AND WE **ALL** KNOW IT.



THERE ARE MILLIONS, MAYBE **BILLIONS**, DEAD OR **DVING** IN THE WORLDS AS THEY ARE. CAN WE **CHOOSE** THEIR DEATHS, BECAUSE THEY'RE EASIER TO **BEAR**?

THE **REALITY** WE **SAW**--IT'S THE **TRUTH**. GOOD, BAD, LOVE, PAIN--IT'S **REAL**.

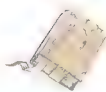
IT'S THE ONE WE'RE **PLEGDED** TO **PROTECT**. NOT... NOT TO **PLAY GOD** WITH.



THEN...
...ARE WE **AGREED**?











PROLOGUE:

YOU
SEE? YOU
SEE?

THEY KNEW
THEY WERE DYING.
THE PEOPLE OF TAA!
KNEW THEIR UNIVERSE
WAS DOOMED!

BUT THEY DID
NOT GO QUIETLY.
THEY FOUGHT--TO
THE END!

THE
LAST OF
THEM MANNED
A SHIP--

--AIMED
IT FOR THE
TERMINAL POINT--
INTO WHICH ALL
MATTER WAS
COLLAPSING--

AS THEY FLEW,
THEY DIED--SUCCEMBED
TO THE UNIVERSAL DECAY
THAT HAD ROBBED THEIR
WORLD OF LIFE.

THEY
DIED--

--ALL BUT
ONE.

ONE SURVIVOR--
ONE MAN, ONE
MIND--

--WHO PLUNGED
INTO THE SEETHING
CAULDRON OF THE
TERMINAL POINT, AND
LISTEN--LISTEN--!

HEAR ME, LAST
SON OF TAA--I AM THE
SENTIENCE OF THE
UNIVERSE!

THOUGH WE BOTH
MUST DIE, WE NEED NOT
DIE WITHOUT AN HEIR. COME,
SURRENDER YOURSELF TO
MY FIERY EMBRACE, AND
LET US BECOME AS--

AND BLAH BLAH
BLAH BLAH BLAH! HE
WAS REBORN, THAT LAST
SURVIVOR, EMERGING IN
THE UNIVERSE TO COME
AS GALACTUS!

THAT IS WHAT I
WRENCHED FROM
GALACTUS'S MIND--
THE SECRET OF HIS
BIRTH!

BUT DO
YOU SEE?
A VOICE IN ONE
UNIVERSE--A HAND
IN ANOTHER!

THERE IS A
SPIRIT THAT GIVES
LIFE TO UNIVERSES! A
CONSCIOUSNESS DEEP IN
THEIR VERY FABRIC!
THEY THINK! FEEL!
LIVE!



QUITE A DISCOVERY, QUITE A
BREAKTHROUGH.

SO, KRONA.
WHAT NOW?



NOW?
I LEARN THE
TRUTH!

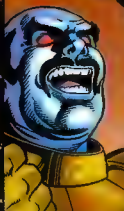
THAT FOOL,
THE GRANDMASTER—
HE TAUGHT ME
TRAPPED BY HIS DAMNABLE
POWER-ITEMS! BUT I
WIELD THEIR ENERGIES
NOW, METRON—

—HERE, AT THE
POINT WHERE TWO
UNIVERSES—TWO COSMIC
SENTENCES—ARE JOINED
TOGETHER!

NOW I HOLD THE
UNIVERSES IN MY
GRIP, FORMING
THEM TO
MERGE!

I WILL FORCE
THEIR ANIMATING
SPIRITS OUT—
MAKE THEM GIVE
UP THE SECRETS
OF CREATION I
HAVE SOUGHT
FOR SO LONG!

I WILL
FINALLY—
KNOW!



AND...IF THE UNIVERSES
CANNOT SURVIVE THE
STRAIN YOU ARE
PUTTING ON THEM?

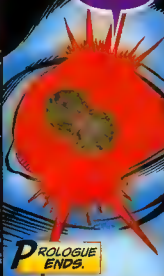
SPFF!

IF
THEY DIE, IT
MATTERS
NOT.

ALL THAT
MATTERS—

—ALL THAT
MATTERS—

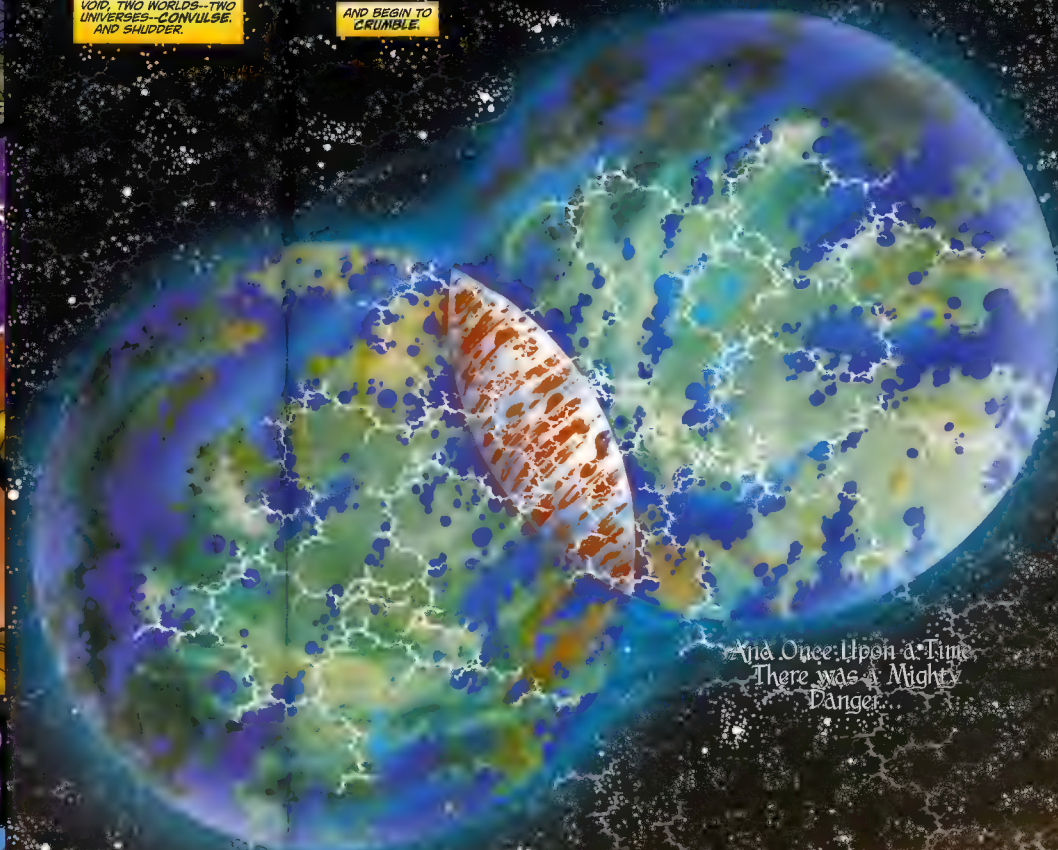
—IS THE
END OF MY
LONG
QUEST!



PROLOGUE
ENDS.

IN THE NOTHINGNESS OF
THE TRANS-DIMENSIONAL
VOID, TWO WORLDS—TWO
UNIVERSES—CONVULSE.
AND SHUDDER.

AND BEGIN TO
CRUMBLE.



And Once Upon a Time
There was a Mighty
Danger...

BOOK FOUR:

The **BRAVE**...the **BOLD**



ONE OF THOSE WORLDS.
NEW YORK.



RELAX, KID. YOU'RE SAFE NOW. AND EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL GONNA BE ALL RIGHT.

I HOPE.

ENVY OPERATIONS CONTINUE--

AS THE WORLDWIDE OUTBREAK OF EARTHQUAKES, FIRES AND WEATHER INVERSIONS ENTERS ITS THIRD--



MAN! IT'S NOT SLOWING DOWN--!

THEN NEITHER DO WE, SPEEDBALL.
WE GO AS LONG AS IT TAKES!



DO WE STOP IT, TANIA?

WE DON'T! THIS IS ALL JUST A SYMPTOM! ALL WE CAN DO IS TREAT IT--

UNTIL SOMEONE ELSE FINDS A CURE!

EARTH'S SUPERHUMANS PRESSED TO THE LIMIT, AROUND THE WORLD--



IN SALISBURY PLAIN, WHERE STONEHENGE THREATENS TO TOPPLE, AND CAPTAIN BRITAIN WORKS TO PRESERVE IT--



JERUSALEM, WHERE ISRAELI HERO SABRA PROTECTS THE WALLING WALL FROM THE LATEST WAVE OF--



WORD OF THE AVENGERS?

THEY'RE WORKING ON THE PROBLEM. EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL...



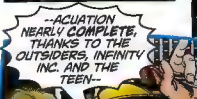
THE OTHER WORLD.
ANOTHER NEW YORK.



SURE YOU CAN, FEW SECONDS LONGER!

JUST A FEW SECONDS LONGER!

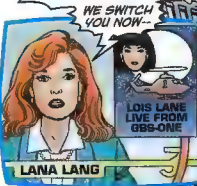
M-MOVE IT GUYS! CANT HOLD--!



ACUATION NEARLY COMPLETE, THANKS TO THE OUTSIDERS, INFINITY INC. AND THE TEEN--



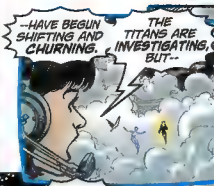
EXCLUDE THE INTERRUPTION, CAPTAIN, BUT THERE SEEM TO BE NEW DEVELOPMENTS. WE SWITCH YOU NOW--



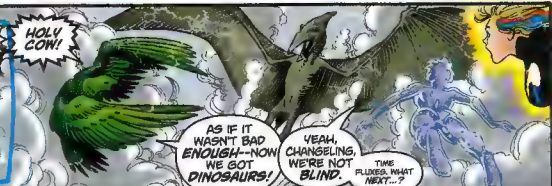
LOIS LANE LIVE FROM GBS-ONE
LANA LANG



MISTS THAT HAD SWALLOWED METROPOLIS AND GOTHAM--



HAVE BEGUN SHIFTING AND CHURNING. THE TITANS ARE INVESTIGATING, BUT--



HOLY COW!

AS IF IT WASN'T BAD ENOUGH--NOW WE GOT DINOSAURS!

YEAH, CHANGELING, WE'RE NOT BLIND. THE FLUXED, WHAT NEXT--?



STILL NO NEWS FROM THE JUSTICE LEAGUE?

COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR LUNAR HEADQUARTERS HAS BEEN SPOTTY, BUT WE'RE CONFIDENT THEY'RE GIVING THEIR FULL EFFORTS TO THE CRISIS--

AND WILL HAVE A SOLUTION SOON.

I SAID--

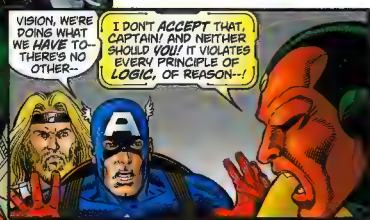


--NO!

THIS IS MADNESS!

VISION...!

I'M GOING HOME!
GOING TO FIND MY CHILDREN!



VISION, WE'RE DOING WHAT WE HAVE TO-- THERE'S NO OTHER--

I DON'T ACCEPT THAT, CAPTAIN! AND NEITHER SHOULD YOU! IT VIOLATES EVERY PRINCIPLE OF LOGIC, OF REASON--!

YOU'VE BLINDLY ACCEPTED WHAT THE GRANDMASTER TOLD US--WHAT OUR OWN MEMORIES SAY IS FALSE! AND YOU'RE WILLING TO SACRIFICE BILLIONS TO THIS CRAZED IDEA OF A RESTORED REALITY--

--A REALITY WHERE THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED-- THAT WE WITNESSED--



I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE TRUE! I WON'T! NOT MY SONS! NOT--NNH!



CALM YOURSELF, AVENGERS. LISTEN TO REASON.



IT'S--NOT--IT-- MAYBE YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT SAVING INNOCENTS, BUT--



VISION, IT'S TRUE. IT'S ALL TRUE.

THE CHAOS-MAGIC ON THIS WORLD--IT'S SO MUCH STRONGER THAN AT HOME, AND I CAN SEE EVERYTHING. SEE THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.

REALITY AS WE KNOW IT IS WARPED--UNSTABLE--



--AND IT'S AFFECTING EVEN US. TWENTY MINUTES AGO, WE NEVER HAD CHILDREN. IN FIVE MINUTES, WE MAY NOT EVER HAVE BEEN MARRIED. DON'T YOU SEE? WE CAN'T PRESERVE THE WAY THINGS ARE, BUT IF WE TRY TO RESTORE WHAT WAS--

BUT... THOMAS... AND WILLIAM...



A--ALL RIGHT. IF IT IS TRULY THE ONLY WAY, JUST... JUST TELL ME...

"...WHAT WE MUST DO..."

WE HAVE NO REAL IDEA WHAT WE'LL BE UP AGAINST. KRONA HAS A HISTORY OF MENTALLY ENTHRALLING OTHERS, USING THEM AS HIS SOLDIERS--

--AS HE DID WITH SONAR AND THOSE OTHERS IN METROPOLIS.

EVEN AFTER WE'VE FOUND HIM, WE COULD BE FACING ANYTHING--ANYONE.

AND HE'LL HAVE DEFENSES, AS WELL.

EACH OF THE ARTIFACTS HE CONTROLS IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO BE A THREAT ON ITS OWN.

HE'S RUTHLESS, HE'S MONOMANIACAL...

YES, LANTERN, HE IS POWERFUL... ANY WHO COULD SLAY THE GRANDMASTER DO TH BE MIGHTY INDEED.

BUT HE IS A VILLAIN. AND WE ARE BENT ON SMITING HIM.

LET US SPEAK NO MORE OF THE DANGER--BUT OF HOW TO REACH OUR GOAL.

WE'LL NEED A WAY IN. THOR MANAGED TO BRING US HERE FROM THE GRANDMASTER'S LAIR--

--BUT FINDING OUR WAY TO KRONA'S STRONGHOLD WILL BE TRICKIER.

BARRY AND I HAVE BEEN TALKING. WE HAVE A FEW IDEAS ON THAT SCORE. WE'LL NEED GREEN LANTERN'S HELP, AND THE VISION'S...

WE'LL NEED A SHIP, AS WELL.

AND MAYBE SOME ENGINEERING ASSISTANCE FROM THE ATOM...

WE'LL ALL DO WHAT WE CAN.

BUT WE NEED A COMMANDER--SOMEONE WHO CAN LEAD BOTH TEAMS, FUSE US INTO ONE.

I BELIEVE THAT SHOULD BE YOU, CAPTAIN AMERICA.

HM?

I'M FLATTERED, BUT I'M NOT SO SURE. THE CONFLICTING NATURE OF OUR TWO WORLDS HAS PUT US ON EDGE, FRAYED TEMPER, JUDGMENTS...

I KNOW.

BUT YOU'RE STILL THE MAN FOR THE JOB.

I CONCUR.

WELL, ALL RIGHT. TEN POINTS FOR OUR SIDE!

ENOUGH, JAN. THIS ISN'T THE TIME. I NEED TO BE CERTAIN. MANHUNTER—WILL THE LEAGUE FOLLOW MY LEAD? WITHOUT HESITATION?

I HAVE SCANNED OUR MINDS.

WE WILL.

ALL RIGHT.

WE MAY NOT KNOW WHAT WE'LL BE FACING, BUT WE CAN TRAIN TOGETHER. GET USED TO ONE ANOTHER'S STYLES. PLUS, I HAVE A TRICK OR TWO IN MIND, BUT FIRST, TRANSFORMATION. AVENGERS, LEAGUE.

"...LET'S GET CRACKING."

THESE SENSORS—THEY ARE MOST UNUSUAL. THE CABLES ALONE ARE LIKE NOTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN...

THEY SHOULD BE, JONNY. THEY'LL CONVERT IRON MAN AND ATOM MY RING-SCANS TO DATA, FEED THEM TO THE ONECARD SYSTEM...

I AM LINKED. HANK, PROCESSING TEST READINGS. ARE YOU GETTING THE RESULTS YOU HOPED FOR?

ACES, VISION!

WITH YOUR COMPUTER-MIND, THIS'LL LET US REACT TO INCOMING DATA VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUSLY, MAKING ADJUSTMENTS AT THE SPEED OF THOUGHT...

I'VE GOT THE HANG OF IT NOW, AQUAMAN. A GOOD SHIP—YOU'RE SURE SHE'LL HANDLE THE STRESSES?

THIS IS AN IMPERIAL ATLANTEAN WARCRAFT CAPTAIN. SHE'LL TAKE THE FULL PRESSURE OF THE OCEAN'S DEEPEST TRENCHES—AND MORE.

I WOULD HAVE SWORN THIS WAS A FOUR-DAY JOB. IRON MAN, BUT YOU'VE TRIPLED BOTH THRUST AND MANEUVERABILITY IN MERE HOURS...

I'M NOT. I DON'T MUCH LIKE GUNS.

MAKE IT TONK. I'M JUST SORRY WE HAD TO DIVERT MOST OF THE CANNON-POWER TO DO IT.

IN HERE, RAY?

PERFECT!

NEXT, THE RED PLUG...

NEW READINGS...

YOU'RE VERY FOCUSED, WANDA.

YES, I'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS I HAVE SOMETHING TO DO.

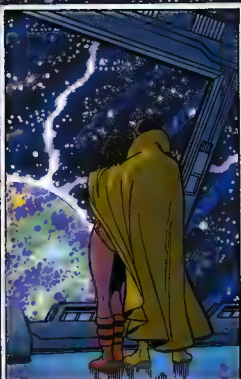
"TONIGHT, WHEN
WE'RE WAITING FOR THE
DIMENSIONAL HARMONICS
TO BE RIGHT FOR TRANSFER..."

"...THAT'S WHEN
IT'LL BE HARD."

VISION...

YES,
MY LOVE.
I KNOW.

I KNOW.



JAN?

WHAT WE SAW, IN THE
"CORRECT" TIMELINE... JAN,
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH, I CAN'T...
CAN'T TELL YOU HOW SORRY
I AM FOR...

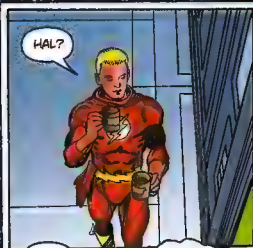
...FOR SOMETHING
I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE
DOING...

IT'S...NOT
IMPORTANT,
HANK.

NOT...NOT
WHEN MEASURED
AGAINST THE
FATE OF TWO
WORLDS...

NO...I
GUESS NOT.
WE'RE JUST
SACRIFICING OUR
HAPPINESS.

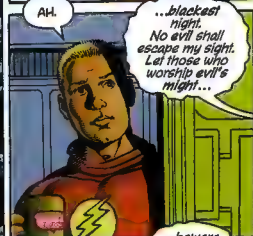
OTHERS...



HAL?

AH.

...blackest
night.
No evil shall
escape my sight.
Let those who
worship evil's
might...



...beware
my power...
Green
Lantern's
light.
THERE.
READY.

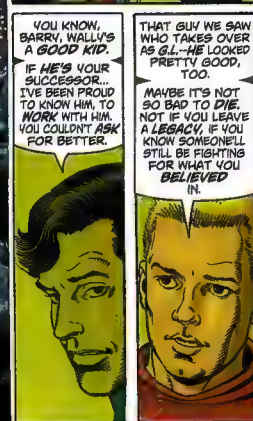


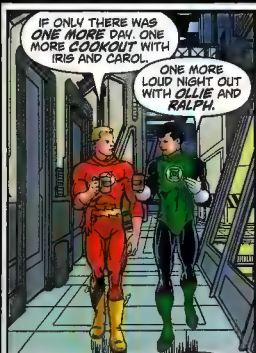
YOU KNOW,
BARRY, WALLY'S
A GOOD KID.

IF HE'S YOUR
SUCCESSOR...
I'VE BEEN PROUD
TO KNOW HIM,
TO WORK WITH HIM.
YOU COULDN'T ASK
FOR BETTER.

THAT GUY WE SAW
WHO TAKES OVER
AS G.L. - HE LOOKED
PRETTY GOOD,
TOO.

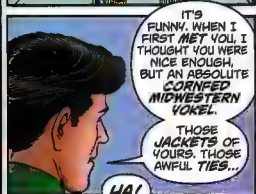
MAYBE IT'S NOT
SO BAD TO DIE.
NOT IF YOU LEAVE
A LEGACY, IF YOU
KNOW SOMEONE'LL
STILL BE FIGHTING
FOR WHAT YOU
BELIEVED
IN.





IF ONLY THERE WAS ONE MORE DAY. ONE MORE COOKOUT WITH IRIS AND CAROL.

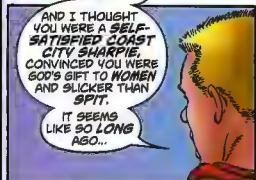
ONE MORE LOUD NIGHT OUT WITH OLLIE AND RALPH.



IT'S FUNNY, WHEN I FIRST MET YOU, I THOUGHT YOU WERE NICE ENOUGH, BUT AN ABSOLUTE CORNFED MIDWESTERN VOKEL.

THOSE JACKETS OF YOURS. THOSE ANFUL TIES...

HA!



AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE A SELF-SATISFIED COAST CITY SHARPIE, CONVINCED YOU WERE GOD'S GIFT TO WOMEN AND SLICKER THAN SPIT.

IT SEEMS LIKE SO LONG AGO...



I'M GOING TO SEE IF THE COM-LINES ARE BETTER. TRY TO REACH IRIS ONE LAST TIME.

GIVE HER MY LOVE.



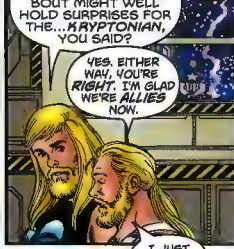
A DIRE PURPOSE, YES, BUT WHAT AN ASSEMBLAGE! THE FINEST OF TWO WORLDS. WITH OUR UNPARALLELED MIGHT, AND THY NOBLE FIRE...

YOUR MIGHT, HM? REVERSE THOSE OUR FIRE?

I MIGHT REVERSE THOSE TWO, AFTER ALL, SUPERMAN AND YOU...

AYE. BUT I HAVE HIS MEASURE NOW, AND ANOTHER BOUT MIGHT WE'LL HOLD SURPRISES FOR THE... KRYPTONIAN, YOU SAID?

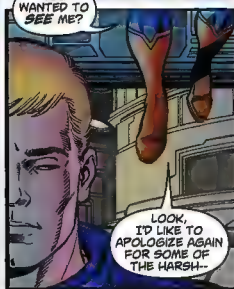
YES, EITHER WAY, YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M GLAD WE'RE ALLIES NOW.



I JUST WISH IT WASN'T...



YOU WANTED TO SEE ME?



LOOK, I'D LIKE TO APOLOGIZE AGAIN FOR SOME OF THE HARSH-



DON'T. YOU WEREN'T YOURSELF. NEITHER WAS I.

I KNOW, BUT I'LL CONFESS—I DO WORRY, SOMETIMES, ABOUT DOING TOO MUCH. DENYING HUMANITY FREEDOM OF CHOICE...

THAT'S WHAT MADE IT STING, ISN'T IT?

THAT DEEP DOWN, WE BOTH WORRY IT MIGHT BE TRUE.

IN MY CASE, THAT AS HARD AS THE AVENGERS FIGHT... I FEAR SOMETIMES IT MAY NEVER BE ENOUGH.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I ASKED FOR YOU.

I'LL NEED YOU TO TAKE THE BRUNT OF THE ATTACK. BUT EVEN YOU AREN'T A MATCH FOR THE POWER KRONA CAN BRING TO BEAR.



I'LL BE IN THE COMMAND SHIP, COORDINATING THE ATTACK, SO...

...I'D LIKE YOU TO CARRY THIS.



I'M... I'M HONORED, CAPTAIN. I'LL DO MY BEST TO YIELD IT WELL.

I JUST HOPE WE'RE READY.



WELL...

"...WE'LL KNOW
SOON ENOUGH."

GO.

CH-CHK

MMMMMMMM

TEK TEK
TEK

THOU HAST
MJOLNIR'S
FULL POWER,
IRON MAN!

YON
DEVICE--
IT WILL
WORK?

I HOPE SO,
THOR.

IT'LL
WORK.

BY RIGHTS, IT
MAKES NO SENSE--
CONVERTING SPEED
TO A VIBRATIONAL
WAVE THAT SHIFTS
THE TEMPORO-
DIMENSIONAL
LOCUS--

IT WOULDN'T
WORK BACK
HOME--

READY?

NOT YET.

SENSORS?

PAN-REALITY
PROBES EXTENDED.
TREADMILL ENERGIES
MOUNTING--
MOUNTING--

KRONA'S SHIELDS
ARE STRONG,
BUT PERHAPS, IF
WE STRIKE AT
THE PRECISE--

AQUAMAN,
WANDA--
WE WILL NEED
FULL THRUST--
AND MAXIMUM
PROBABILITY
DISRUPTION--

--NOW!

AND IN AN INSTANT,
THE ATLANTEAN SHIP
SURGES FORWARD--

AND THE WALLS OF
THE WATCHTOWER
MELT AROUND THEM--

AND REALITY--



--CHANGES--

GREAT GUARDIANS! HIS STRONGHOLD--
IT'S--

IT'S
GALACTUS.

HE BUILT
IT FROM THE
REMAINS OF
GALACTUS.



WITHIN...

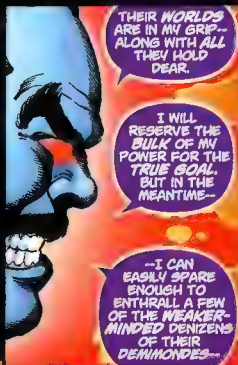
HMP.

OF COURSE THE FOOLS WOULD MAKE SOME ATTEMPT TO BAR MY PATH.



ARE YOU PREPARED?

ALWAYS.



THEIR WORLDS ARE IN MY GRIP—ALONG WITH ALL THEY HOLD DEAR.

I WILL RESERVE THE BULK OF MY POWER FOR THE TRUE GOAL. BUT IN THE MEANTIME—

—I CAN EASILY SPARE ENOUGH TO ENTHRALL A FEW OF THE WEAKER-MINDED DENIZENS OF THEIR DEMIMONDES.



ZKAM

ZKAM

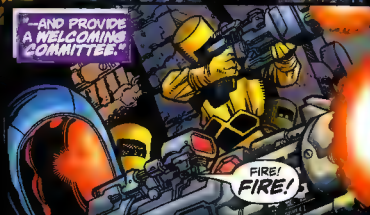
ZKAM

WHAT IN--?

CHOW

CHOW

CHOW



"AND PROVIDE A WELCOMING COMMITTEE."

FIRE!
FIRE!



HAIL KRONA!
IMMORTAL KRONA!

HE SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED!



DESTROY THE INTRUDERS!
IN THE NAME OF NAJA-N--

IN THE NAME OF KRONA!



KILL FOR
KRONA! DIE FOR
KRONA!

THE INTRUDERS'
SHIP! IT'S LANDING
JUST OVER THAT RISE!
WE'D BETTER--



GO COWER IN YOUR HOLES,
HUMAN! WE HAVE NO
NEED OF YOU!

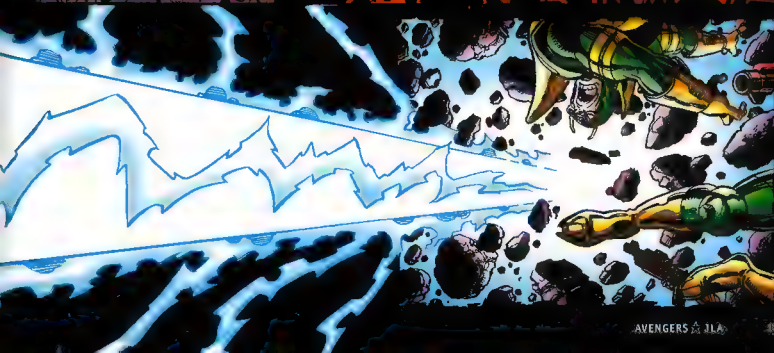
WHO-
EVER AND
WHATEVER
THEY ARE,
THE SHOCK-
TROOPS OF
APOKOLIPS
WILL MAKE
SHORT
WORK
OF--



EH?

BY THE
FURY OF THE
INFERNAL
FIREPITS!
HOW--?

WHO--?





AND NOW
LET THE CITY
RING OUT!

LET IT SHAKE THE
GROUND AND ROCK THE
FIRMAMENT ABOVE--

--THAT KRONA
SHALL KNOW--WE
COME FOR HIM!

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

AND
JUSTICE LEAGUE,
UH--LAMBASTE!



SO.

HE REALLY
EXPECTS THIS TO
STOP US?

OFF!

AHH!



WONDER WOMAN,
GOLIATH,
AQUAMAN--

GET THE
ENEMY'S
ATTENTION--
AND HOLD
IT!

NO
PROBLEM!

MINDLINK
ESTABLISHED.
CAPTAIN
AMERICA--
YOU ARE IN
COMMAND

THANK
YOU, JONN.
ALL RIGHT,
EVERYONE--
WE'RE ON
UNKNOWN
TERRAIN AND
UNDER
ASSAULT.



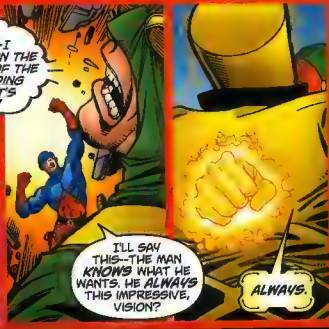
FIRST PRIORITIES--
BEACHHEAD AND
RECONNAISSANCE!

HUU!

UHH!

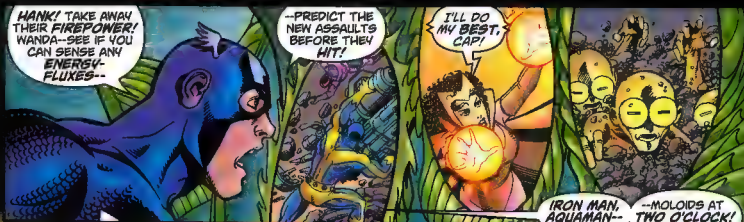


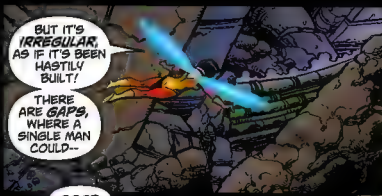
LANTERN,
THOR--I
WANT YOU ON THE
FAR SIDE OF THE
LINES, FINDING
OUT WHAT'S
NEXT!



I'LL SAY
THIS--THE MAN
KNOWS WHAT HE
WANTS. HE ALWAYS
HAS THIS IMPRESSIVE,
VISION?

ALWAYS.





BUT IT'S
IRREGULAR,
AS IF IT'S BEEN
HASTILY
BUILT!

THERE
ARE **GAPS,**
WHERE A
SINGLE MAN
COULD--

GOOD.

BATMAN, I
WANT YOU THROUGH
THAT FIELD--FIND THE
CONTROL STATION
FOR IT AND
SHUT IT--

BATMAN?



OH.

WELL, GIVE
A SHOUT IF
YOU NEED ANY
HELP.

HE **WON'T,**
CAP, BUT DON'T
WORRY. HE'S LIKE
THAT WITH ALL
OF--

--**HUH?**

THAT
NOISE--THAT
LIGHT!

WHAT ON
EARTH--?

IT'S SOME
SORT OF **WAVE,**
CAP--RIPPLING
THROUGH THE
WHOLE AREA!

BUT
IT'S **WILD,**
CHAOTIC--IT'S
NOT ANYTHING
KRONA COULD
HAVE--

--**EH?**

HUH?
WHERE--?



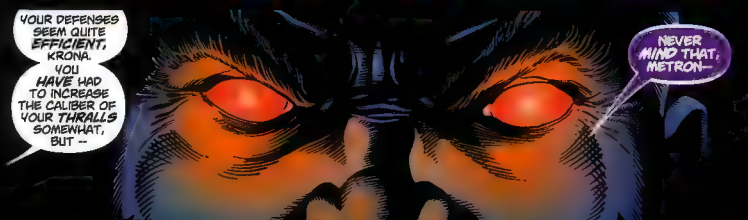
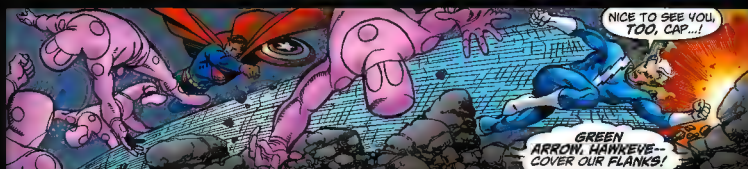
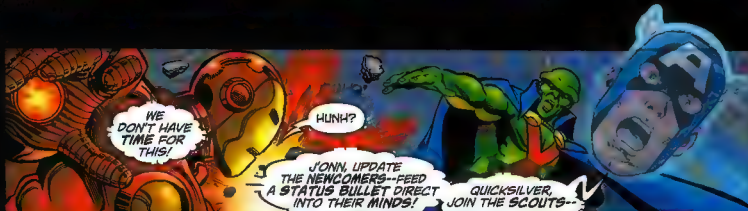
SHEESH! SOMEBODY TELL ME
NEVER TO EAT
ANCHOVY PIZZA
RIGHT BEFORE
BED AGAIN--!

IT'S NO
DREAM, CLINT!
I DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT IS, BUT
YOU'RE HERE,
WANDA'S
GONE--

IT'S SOME
SORT OF **CHRONAL**
INSTABILITY! THE
ENERGY THAT'S BEEN
MAKING OUR **WORLDS**
GO CRAZY--IT'S
REACHED HERE,
NOW--

--AND IT'S
AFFECTING US!
OUR **UNIFORMS, OUR**
ROSTERS--!







—THERE IS MORE IMPORTANT WORK TO DO.

WITH THE ENERGIES I AM DRAWING FROM THE TWO UNIVERSES, THEY WILL NOT REMAIN COHERENT MUCH LONGER--

—NOR WILL THIS OASIS BETWEEN THEM.

BUT I HAVE LOCATED THE UNIVERSAL AVATARS--THE CONSCIOUSNESSES OF THE TWO REALMS--AND SEIZED THEM.

I MUST HAVE MY ANSWERS SOON--BEFORE THEY ARE ANNIHILATED! AID ME, METRON--
—HELP ME FORCE THEM TO AN ACCOUNTING!

WHAT? DON'T MAKE JOKES, METRON! YOU ARE THE ONE WHO LED ME TO THE AVENGERS' UNIVERSE, HELPED ME SEE ITS POSSIBILITIES!

YOU CANNOT BACK OUT NOW. ARE WE NOT BOTH TRUTH-SEEKERS?

ARE WE?

EH?

ASK YOURSELF WHAT YOU TRULY SEEK, KRONA. ASK YOURSELF HONESTLY. IS IT TRUTH? ANSWERS? OR IS IT CONQUEST?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, I LEAVE UP TO YOU. BUT I SHALL BE WATCHING.

AND BELIEVE ME...

BOOM



"...I WILL BE
VERY INTERESTED
IN THE OUTCOME..."

BATMAN
TO CAPTAIN
AMERICA.
THE FIELD
GENERATORS
ARE DOWN -- A
FEW EXPLOSIVE
CHARGES TOOK
CARE OF THEM. SEND
THE OTHERS
THROUGH.

I'M SCOUTING
FURTHER,
TO SEE
IF I CAN FIND AN
UNDEFEATED
PATH TO--

--TO--
ZNNK



'ALLO, MON AMI! ZAT IS YOUR
JAW -- AND ZIS IS ZE FOOT
OF BATROC--
--BATROC,
ZE LEAPAIR!

UHH!

ZE VOICE IN MA
TETE -- MY HEAD --
TELLS ME YOU ARE A
MOS' SKILLFUL FIGHTER.
AN' BATROC, HE LOVES
TO MEET ZE SKILLFUL
FIGHTERS!

LET US SEE
WHICH OF US IS ZE
MOST SKILLFUL, HEIN?

AHP--

AHP--





--ALLIYOWWWW!

WHERE'D
THOSE GUYS COME
FROM? WHERE'D THAT
ENERGY-BARRIER
COME FROM?

COME TO THINK
OF IT, WHERE'D WE
COME FROM?

WELL, IT
COULD BE THE
ENERGY-BARRIER'S
PART OF THE
AUTOMATIC
DEFENSES,
AND--

OH,
WHY AM I EVEN
ANSWERING?



THE
WHY'S AND
WHEREFORES
MATTER NOT,
MALLEABLE
ONES!

WE HAVE
AN OBSTACLE
BEFORE US--

--AND IT
SHALL NOT
STAND!



YEAH? HOW'S
THIS FOR AN
OBSTACLE, YOU
BIG APE?

AHHH! MY
EARS!

SCREAMING
MIMI--!



WHO CARES WHO
SHE IS, HERC?
SHE STEALS MY
GIMMICK-- SHE'S
TOAST!

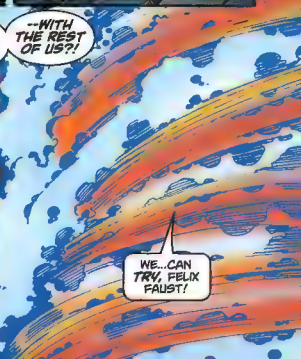
AAAAAAH!



VERY
IMPRESSIONE,
BLACK CANARY.

YOU HAVE
DOWNED A POSTURING
MORON. WILL YOU DO AS
WELL, I WONDER--

--WITH
THE REST OF
US?!

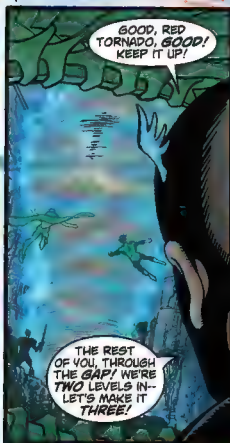


WE...CAN
TRY, FELIX
FAUST!



YOUR
ENERGY-WALL,
FOR INSTANCE--

--WILL ONLY
PROTECT YOU... AS
LONG AS IT STANDS!



GOOD, RED
TORNADO, GOOD!
KEEP IT UP!

THE REST
OF YOU, THROUGH
THE GAP! WE'RE
TWO LEVELS IN--
LET'S MAKE IT
THREE!

ESTABLISH
A BEACHHEAD,
AND SPREAD OUT
FROM THERE! WE'LL DO
THE SAME WITH THE
NEXT RING OF
DEFENSES--

--AND
THE NEXT --
UNTIL WE'RE
IN!

YOU
HEARD
THE MAN,
BANG!

WE
GO--



--AND WE
DON'T SLOW
DOWN!

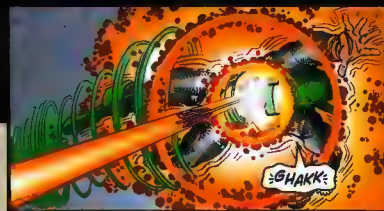
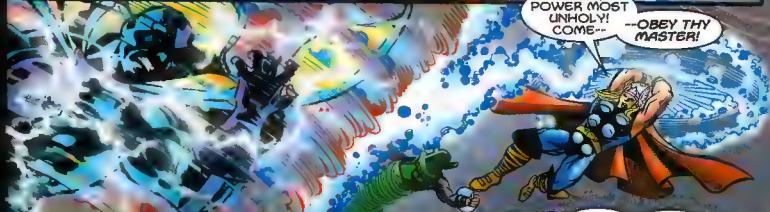
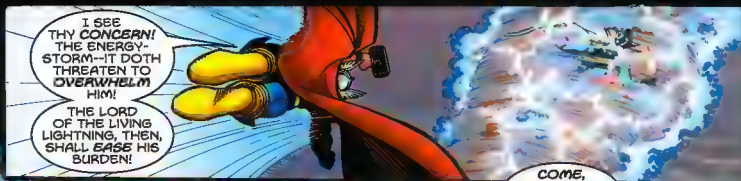
WE'VE
FACED LONG
ODDS BEFORE--
AND BEAT
'EM!

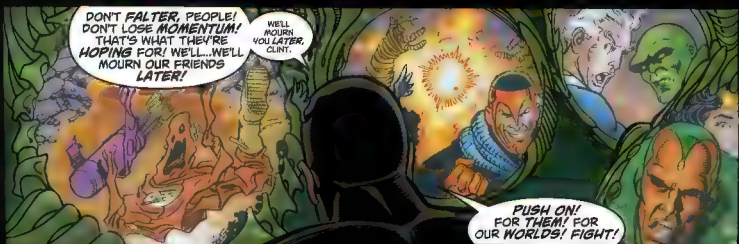
WE'LL
DO IT AGAIN--
WE ALWAYS
DO!



SUPERMAN!
DOST THOU
NEED AID?

I'M...
SHNAAZE...ALL
RIGHT!
THOR!
BUT THE RED
TORNADO...







AND THEY DO.

THEY DO.

THEIR ENEMIES MULTIPLY
SERVINGLY WITHOUT LIMIT,
AND STILL THEY FIGHT.



THEIR OWN NUMBERS
SHIFT AND CHANGE
WITHOUT WARNING.

AND STILL
THEY FIGHT.



CHAOS ASSAULTS THEM
ON ALL SIDES, AND ANY
LESSER HEROES WOULD
BE OVERWHELMED.

BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA'S
KEEN MIND COMPENSATES
FOR EVERY NEW SURPRISE.

JOHN JONZ'S TELEPATHY
TRANSMITS HIS ORDERS
INSTANTLY TO HEARING
CHAMPIONS AND NEW
ARRIVALS ALIKE.



THEIR ENEMIES MULTIPLY
SEEMINGLY WITHOUT LIMIT.
AND STILL THEY FIGHT.



CHAOS ASSAILS THEM
ON ALL SIDES, AND ANY
LESSER HEROES WOULD
BE OVERWHELMED.

BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA'S
KEEN MIND COMPENSATES
FOR EVERY NEW SURPRISE.

JOHN JONZZ'S TELEPATHY
TRANSMITS HIS ORDERS
INSTANTLY TO WEARYING
CHAMPIONS AND NEW
ARRIVALS ALIKE.





OH, NO!
THE MIND-LINK, IT'S GONE!

J'ONN?

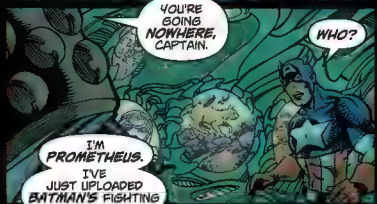
MANHUNTER?
J'ONN? ARE YOU THERE?
J'ONN!

BLAST IT,
CHRONAL CHAOS
GOT HIM. I'D BETTER
GET OUT THERE,
AND--



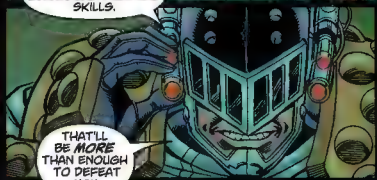
YOU'RE GOING
NOWHERE,
CAPTAIN.

WHO?



I'M
PROMETHEUS.

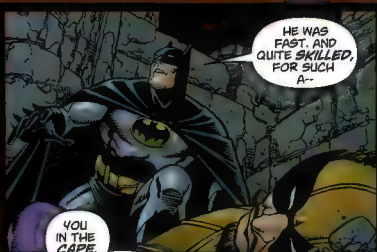
I'VE
JUST UPLOADED
BATMAN'S FIGHTING
SKILLS.



THAT'LL
BE MORE
THAN ENOUGH
TO DEFEAT
YOU.



OH?



HE WAS
FAST, AND
QUITE SKILLED,
FOR SUCH
A--

YOU
IN THE
CAPE.

YOU
DOWNED
BATROC.

NOW
FACE
US.



GOOD DAY,
BATMAN.

COULD YOU
PERHAPS USE AN
EXTRA HAND?



OR
MAYBE
SIX?



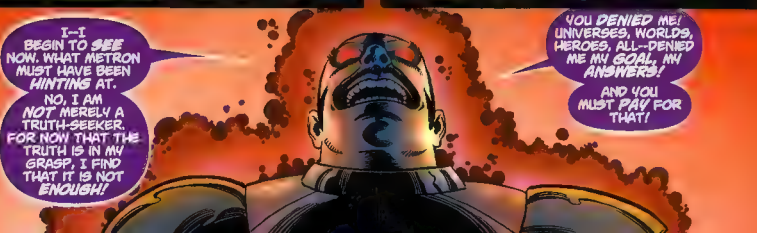
IF YOU'VE
GOT NOTHING
BETTER TO
DO.

I-I
BEGIN TO SEE
NOW. WHAT METRON
MUST HAVE BEEN
HINTING AT.

NO, I AM
NOT MERELY A
TRUTH-SEEKER.
FOR NOW THAT THE
TRUTH IS IN MY
GRASP, I FIND
THAT IT IS NOT
ENOUGH!

YOU DENIED ME!
UNIVERSES, WORLDS,
HEROES, ALL--DENIED
ME MY GOAL, MY
ANSWERS!

AND YOU
MUST PAY FOR
THAT!





THE
CITADEL!

SOMETHING'S--
SOMETHING'S
HAPPENING--!

WE'LL
GET THERE!
WE'LL GET
THERE!



UHH!

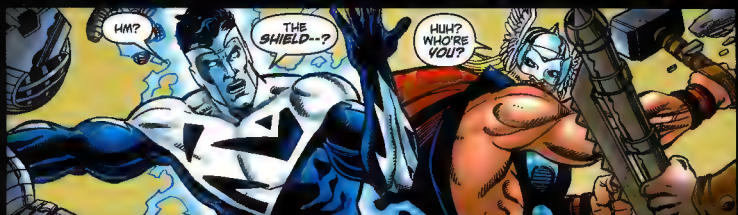
HAH!

AH-AH!

BACK
OFF, YOU
TWO!

YA-
HAHH!

SHHKKK



HM?

THE
SHIELD--?

HUH?
WHORE
YOU?



NEURAL CHAFF.
HYPNOTIC LIGHTS.
PRE-PROGRAMMED
SKILLS.

TRY FIGHTING
THE WEHRMACHT,
MISTER--

--IT
TEACHES YOU
FOCUS!

UHHHHH!



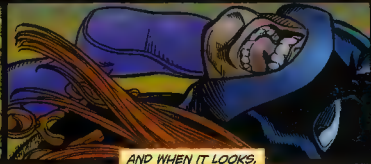
THEY SMASH GUARD TOWERS,
GUN EMPLACEMENTS,
FORCE-FIELD WALLS.



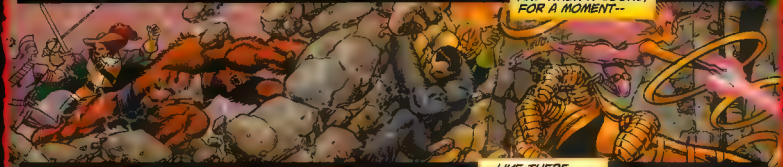
EVERY VICTORY
HARD-FOUGHT.



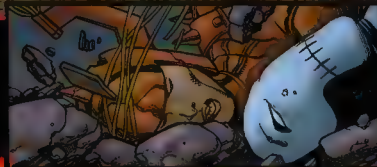
EVERY INCH OF GROUND PAID
FOR IN SWEAT AND BLOOD.



AND WHEN IT LOOKS,
FOR A MOMENT--



--LIKE THERE
MIGHT BE HOPE--



WE'VE
GOT THEM
ON THE
RUN.

YES,
AND--

WAIT.
AT THE
CITADEL!
WHAT'S--



I'M... I'M BACK!
WHEREVER I WAS,
I TRACED MY PATH
BACK VIA CHAOS-
MAGIC, AND--

OH, MY
LORD.

THAT'S
ETERNITY--
AND HIS COUNTERPART
FROM THE LEAGUE'S
UNIVERSE, NO
DOUBT!

IF KRONA
CAN IMPRISON
THEM...!



YOU
DENIED
ME! AND YOU
WILL DIE
FOR IT!

ALREADY YOUR
STRENGTH FAILS!
ALREADY YOU SUFFER
AND WRITHE, WHOLE
GALAXIES
COLLAPSING
WITHIN YOU!
SEEK YOUR
PETTY TRUTHS,
METRON--



--I SHALL TEAR MINE FROM
THE CORPSES OF TWO
COSMOSES! I AM KRONA!
AND I DO NOT SEEK!

I
TAKE!

WANDA,
DOES WHAT
I'M SEEING
MEAN WHAT
I FEAR IT
DOES?

IT'S... **BAD**. I'M TRYING
TO REACH INTO THE
CHAOS-FIELD--BRING
MORE OF US THROUGH,
KEEP MORE OF
THEM OUT--



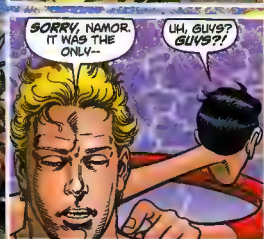
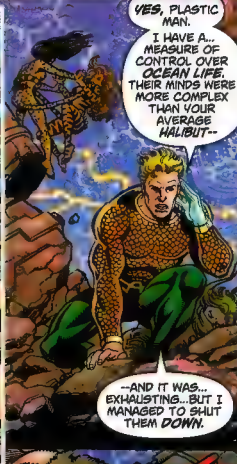
BUT JAN,
I CAN TELL...
WE'RE ALMOST
OUT OF TIME...!

READY--
STEADY--

--**NOW!**









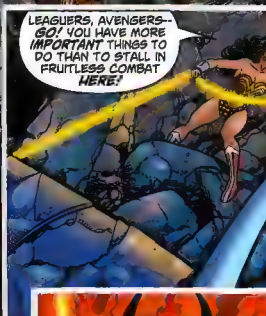
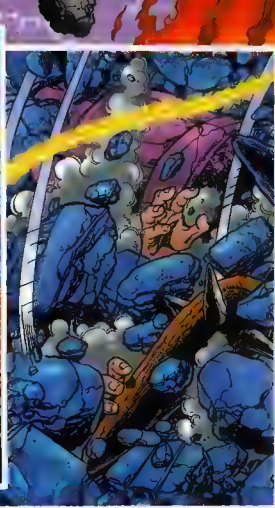
IS THERE
NO END TO
THEM?

BY THE
BOW OF
ATHENA,
I SAY--



--NO
MORE!

URH?



LEAGUERS, AVENGERS--
GO! YOU HAVE MORE
IMPORTANT THINGS TO
DO THAN TO STALL IN
FRUITLESS COMBAT
HERE!



I WILL GUARD THIS
APPROACH--AND I
SWEAR TO YOU THAT NO
ONE WILL PASS WHILE
I LIVE. NO ONE!



NOT...
WHILE I
LIVE...

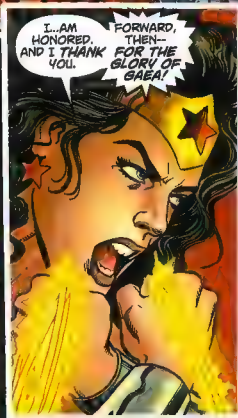
HEY, STAR-
SHORTS!



THOUGHT I MIGHT HANG, IN CASE
YOU GET BORED. WE COULD TALK
GIRL TALK--

--YOU KNOW,
ASS-KICKING,
NAME-TAKING,
LIKE THAT.

AYE, AND
I STAND WITH
YOU AS WELL,
DAUGHTER.



I...AM
HONORED,
AND I THANK
YOU.

FORWARD,
THEN--
FOR THE
GLORY OF
GAEA!



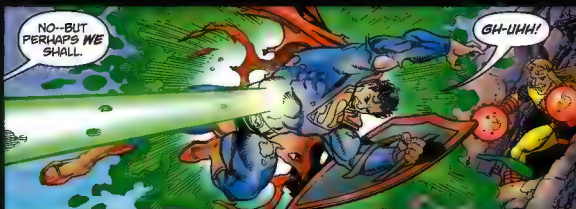
WELL,
WELL.

"A" FOR EFFORT,
BLUE-BOY--YOU'VE
REACHED THE
MASTER'S INNER
STRONGHOLD.

BUT THIS
IS AS FAR AS
YOU GO!

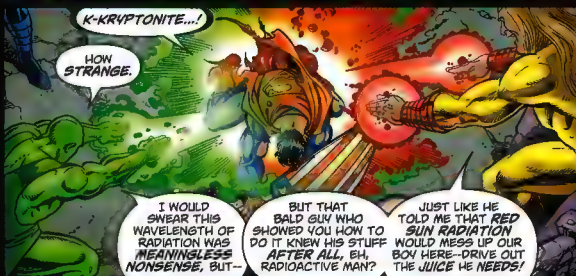
OH.

YOU'RE
GOING TO
STOP ME?



NO--BUT
PERHAPS WE
SHALL.

GH-UHH!



K-KRYPTONITE...!

HOW
STRANGE.

I WOULD
SWEAR THIS
WAVELENGTH OF
RADIATION WAS
MEANINGLESS
NONSENSE, BUT--

BUT THAT
BALD GUY WHO
SHOWED YOU HOW TO
DO IT KNEW HIS STUFF
AFTER ALL, EH,
RADIOACTIVE MAN?

JUST LIKE HE
TOLD ME THAT RED
SUN RADIATION
WOULD MESS UP OUR
BOY HERE--DRIVE OUT
THE JUICE HE NEEDS!

>KHXX<
INTERNAL...
>BZK< DAMAGE...
CAN'T...STAY
ACTIVE...

BUT IF >ZKK<
SOLARR SPEAKS
TRUE...PERHAPS
I CAN...AID
SUPERMAN...

...WITH >KXKX<
REMAINING
STORES...OF
SOLAR
ENERGY...



HNNNNNN...



ALL RIGHT...
RADIOACTIVE MAN,
WAS IT? AND
SOLARR?

A GOOD MAN
JUST DIED TO
GIVE ME ANOTHER
CHANCE AT YOU
AND YOUR
MASTER.

SO LET'S
TRY THIS AGAIN,
SHALL WE?



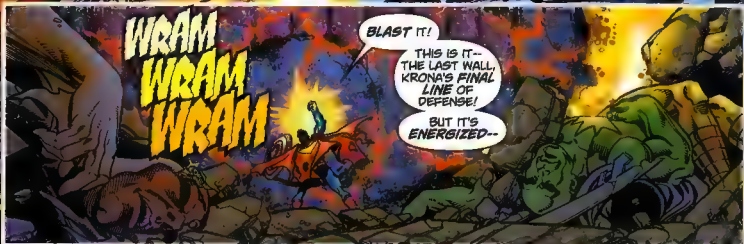


SO HOW'RE
WE DOING,
WANDA?

IT'S
HARD...HARD
TO TELL!

I THINK...WE'RE
BLOCKING KRONA
FROM BRINGING MORE
REINFORCEMENTS,
BUT...

...THERE MAY BE
ONLY SECONDS
LEFT...



WRAM
WRAM
WRAM

BLAST IT!

THIS IS IT--
THE LAST WALL,
KRONA'S FINAL
LINE OF
DEFENSE!

BUT IT'S
ENERGIZED--



--SOME KIND OF
POWERFUL
FORCE-FIELD--

--AND I CAN'T--
CAN'T--



YOUR
STRUGGLES
ARE FUTILE,
STORMGOD.
YOU
CANNOT STAND
AGAINST US ALL--
YOU WILL FALL
HERE

AYE?

PERHAPS--
PERHAPS I SHALL,
BUT--

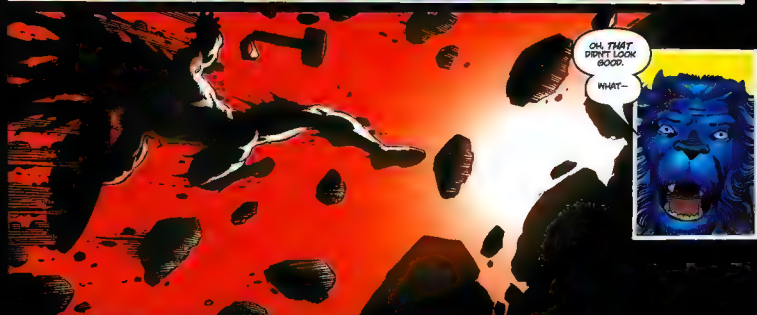
SUPERMAN!



EH?



DO
THOU WELL
WITH IT!





THERE ARE NONE LEFT
TO OPPOSE HIS WILL.
NONE AT ALL.

HE SMILES, A THIN,
UNPLEASANT SMILE.

AND NOW,
MY RECALCITRANT
UNIVERSES, I TURN MY
FULL ATTENTION
TO YOU.

YOUR CHAMPIONS
STAVED OFF YOUR
DEATHS—BUT ONLY
BRIEFLY. NOW, YOU
SHALL—

WH--?

HEY THERE, KRONA.
LOOKS LIKE YOU
MISCOUNTED.

FLASH?
BUT—I SAW
YOU!
YOU
DIED!

IF YOU
SAV SO, I'M
JUST THE
DISTRACTION.
BY THE
WAY.

WHAT?

NO!

HIVA. FLASH HERE GOT US OUT OF THAT
MYSTIC WHAMMY WITH OUR SKINS STILL
MOSTLY UNFRIED—

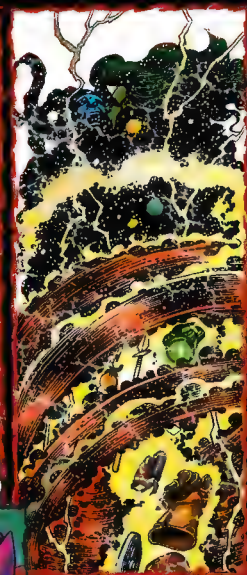
—AND CAP
THOUGHT WE'D
BETTER LAY LOW,
WAIT FOR THE RIGHT
OPPORTUNITY.

THIS WAS
IT.

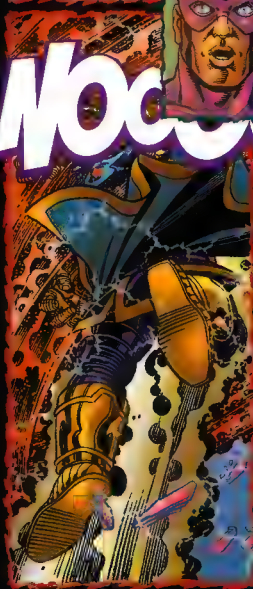
OH, THAT
ARROW? LAST ONE I
HAD...

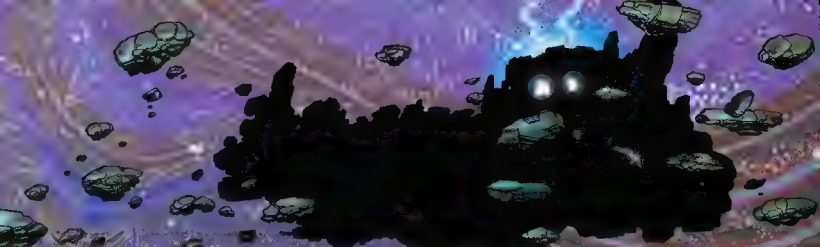
...A T.N.T.
ARROW.

NO!



Nooooooooooooo!





I'M...NOT SURE, BUT I THINK...WHATEVER THIS WAS, IT'S DONE.

YES, WALLY. THE CHRONAL CHAOS IS FADING.

MY HAND... GONE AGAIN...

ALL THE BODIES--OUR ALLIES--FALLEN VILLAINS--THEY'VE FRODO AWAY.

YEAH.

LOOKS LIKE IT'S JUST US...

...JUST THE GUYS WHO STARTED OUT ON THIS WHOLE SHEBANG.

AND IF ANYONE KNOWS A GOOD SUPER-STRONG CHIROPRACTOR... *SNFF!E*

WHY'S EVERYONE SO SOMBER? WE WON, RIGHT?

YOU WEREN'T HERE FOR MOST OF IT. FLASH. SO MANY FALLEN--

--SO MANY DEAD--

MAYBE NOT, IRON MAN. THERE'S STILL A CHANCE...

HUH? HEY!

CAP! AND THE BIG GREEN GUY!

YES. AND AS I WAS SAYING...

THE OTHER BIG GREEN GUY!

REALITY IS REORDERING ITSELF. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THAT WILL BRING. BUT EVEN IF THIS IS THE COST--

--WE CAN TAKE SOLACE IN THE FACT THAT WE DID WHAT WAS NECESSARY.

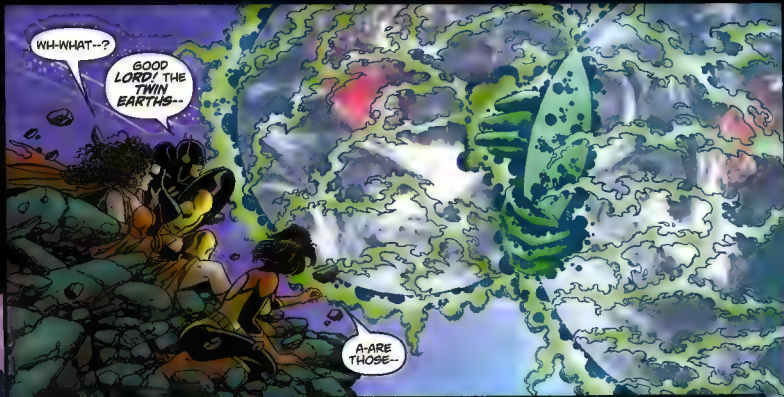
AND THAT IT IS OVER.

MAYBE NOT, LOOK.

HM?

THERE, IN THE SKY--

--SOME SORT OF RIFPLE--



WH-WHAT--?

GOOD
LORD! THE
TWIN
EARTHS--

A-ARE
THOSE--



--HANDS?

KRONA
AGAIN?

NO,
TRIATHLON...



...IT'S
NOT.

WE FOUGHT
BESIDE HIM EARLIER
TODAY. HE IS HAL JORDAN.
ONCE GREEN LANTERN.
NOW THE
SPECTRE.

HE IS ONE OF
THOSE WHO PAID
THE GREATEST COST
TO FIGHT THIS FIGHT.
AND EVEN NOW, EVEN
RETURNED TO THIS
STATE...

...HE
FIGHTS
ON.



I'M...
IMPRESSED.



AND
THERE THEY
GO.

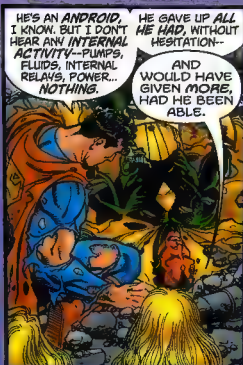
NICE.
BUT, Y'KNOW,
WITH THEM
SPLITTING
UP...

YEAH...



"...WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS PLACE?"

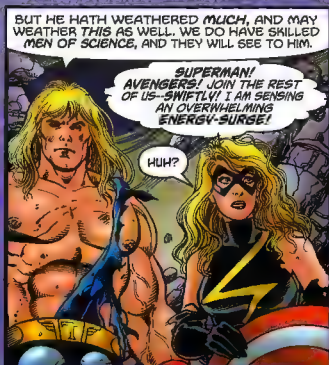
SUPERMAN?



HE'S AN ANDROID. I KNOW. BUT I DON'T HEAR ANY INTERNAL ACTIVITY--PUMPS, FLUIDS, INTERNAL RELAYS, POWER... NOTHING.

HE GAVE UP ALL HE HAD, WITHOUT HESITATION--

AND WOULD HAVE GIVEN MORE, HAD HE BEEN ABLE.



SUPERMAN! AVENGERS! JOIN THE REST OF US--SWIFTLY! I AM SENSING AN OVERWHELMING ENERGY-SURGE!

HUH?



WHOA--THE GROUND! EARTHQUAKE! OR, UH, SPACEQUAKE, OR WHATEVER...

--AND WE DARE NOT REMAIN!

THERE'S YOUR ANSWER ABOUT THIS PLACE, LANTERN.

REALITY'S REBUILDING ITSELF...



AND GALACTUS IS RE-FORMING!

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE



HERE, THOR.

I'LL--



NNNFF!
WHAT?

ALLOW ME.



THERE IS AN ENCHANTMENT 'PON MY HAMMER, LAID BY MY FATHER ODIN. IT IS NOT...EASILY LIFTED, BY OTHERS.

I HELD IT BEFORE--

MY FATHER IS STERN, SUPERMAN. BUT NOT STUPID. A VERY FEW WORTHIES HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO OVERCOME THE SPELL, IN DESPERATE HOURS.

BUT KNOW THIS. PERHAPS IT WAS BUT BRIEFLY...BUT IT WAS IN GOOD HANDS.



And once upon
a time...

as with all things
that happen
once upon a time...

LET'S GO! LET'S GO!

WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT
OF HERE--WHILE
THERE'S STILL A HERE
TO GET OUT OF!

AND I'LL
TELL YOU, WALLY,
WHEN WE GET BACK--

--IF MY
POWER-BATTERY
HASN'T BEEN
REALITY-RESTORED
TO MY APARTMENT--

--SOMEONE'S
IN BIG TROUBLE--!

... the tale reached
an ending.

CAPTAIN.

WHETHER WE
FEAR WE DO TOO
MUCH--OR NOT
ENOUGH--

WE KEEP
TRYING.

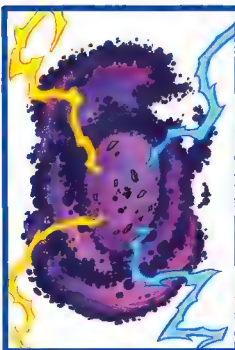
GLAD TO HAVE MET YOU.
ALL OF YOU.

AND NOW THAT WE'VE COME
TOGETHER...WORKED TOGETHER,
OVERCOME OUR DIFFERENCES...

...WE'RE
FORCED TO RETURN
TO INCOMPATIBLE
WORLDS.

BUT I SUPPOSE...
THAT'S HOW IT
HAS TO BE...

For
all things,
ultimately,
must have an
ending...



AND SENSORS CONFIRM KRONA'S ESSENCE AT THE HEART OF IT. ONE DAY, PERHAPS, IT WILL HATCH... BIRTH A NEW UNIVERSE, A NEW REALITY.

AND KRONA WILL LEARN HIS LONG-BOUGHT TRUTHS...BY BEING A PART OF THEM.

INDEED.

AH. AND HOW DID YOU ENJOY BEING DEAD, EN DAI GAST?



IT WAS...AN EXPERIENCE. THOUGH NOT ONE I AM ANXIOUS TO REPEAT. I AM GLAD THE HEROES WON, RESTORING ALL. OR ALMOST ALL.

HAD THEY FAILED...



HAD THEY FAILED, YOU TOO WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNRESTORED.

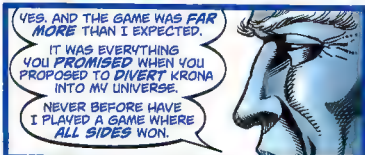
BUT THAT WAS THE GAME WE AGREED TO PLAY, AND YOU KNEW THE STAKES FROM THE START.



YES. AND THE GAME WAS FAR MORE THAN I EXPECTED.

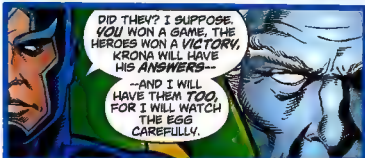
IT WAS EVERYTHING YOU PROMISED WHEN YOU PROPOSED TO DIVERT KRONA INTO MY UNIVERSE.

NEVER BEFORE HAVE I PLAYED A GAME WHERE ALL SIDES WON.



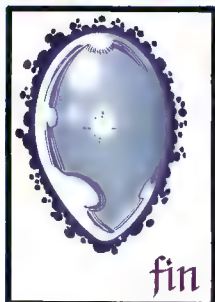
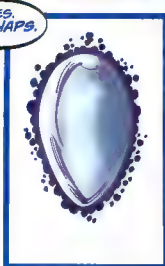
DID THEY? I SUPPOSE. YOU WON A GAME, THE HEROES WON A VICTORY, KRONA WILL HAVE HIS ANSWERS--

--AND I WILL HAVE THEM TOO, FOR I WILL WATCH THE EGG CAREFULLY.



PERHAPS WE SHOULD DO THIS AGAIN SOMEDAY.

YES. PERHAPS.



fin





CHARACTER KEY

George Perez does nothing small. He saw to it that everyone who had ever been a member of the JLA or the Avengers made an appearance in this mini-series. Not to be outdone, he stuffed 208 characters onto the cover for issue #3 (pages 220-221). You will find many variations in appearance and persona chronicling the different heroes' personal evolution. Presented here is a detailed key to the heroes for your reading pleasure.

#	COMPANY	CHARACTER	CIVILIAN NAME
1	Marvel	Thunderstrike	Eric Masterson
2	DC	Mystek	Jennifer Barclay
3	Marvel	Firebird	Bonita Juarez
4	DC	Hawkgirl II	Kendra Saunders
5	Marvel	Dinah Soar	Dinah
6	DC	Warrior	Guy Gardner
7	DC	Zauriel	
8	DC	Jade	Jennie Hayden
9	DC	Major Disaster	Paul Booker
10	Marvel	Charlie 27	
11	Marvel	Aleta	Aleta Ogord
12	Marvel	Demolition-Man	Dennis Dunphy
13	DC	Cluemaster	Arthur Brown
14	DC	Captain Comet	Adam Blake
15	DC	Captain Atom	Nathaniel Adam
16	DC	Adam Strange	Adam Strange
17	DC	Green Lantern	Kilowog
18	Marvel	Captain Marvel	Mar-Vell
19	DC	Doctor Fate	Hector Hall
20	DC	Silver Sorceress	Laura Nielsen
21	Marvel	Doctor Druid	Anthony Druid
22	DC	Phantom Stranger	
23	Marvel	Moondragon	Heather Douglas
24	DC	Sargon the Sorcerer	John Sargent
25	Marvel	Quasar	Wendell Vaughn
26	DC	Hawkwoman II	Sharon Hall
27	DC	Hawkman II	Fel Andar
28	DC	Yazz	
29	DC	Gypsy	Cindy Reynolds
30	Marvel	Justice	Vance Astrovik
31	DC	Doctor Fate	Linda Strauss
32	DC	Faith	
33	Marvel	Vance Astro	
34	DC	Retro	
35	DC	Nuklon	Albert Rothstien
36	Marvel	Magdalene	
37	Marvel	Swordsman II	Philip Jarvert
38	DC	Manitou Raven	
39	Marvel	Thing	Benjamin J. Grimm
40	DC	Clock King	William Tockman
41	DC	Aztek	Curt Falconer
42	DC	Green Lantern	Guy Gardner
43	DC	Hawkman I	Carter Hall
44	Marvel	Darkhawk	Christopher Powell
45	Marvel	Mockingbird	Barbara Morse
46	DC	Steel II	Hank Heywood III
47	DC	Maxima	
48	DC	General Glory I	Joseph Jones
49	DC	Black Condor II	Ryan Kendall
50	DC	Red Tornado II	John Smith
51	Marvel	Vision	
52	Marvel	Human Torch I	Jim Hammond
53	DC	Black Lightning	Jefferson Pierce
54	DC	Hawkman III	Katar Hol
55	DC	Blue Jay	Jay Abrams
56	Marvel	Living Lightning	Miguel Santos
57	DC	Green Lantern	John Stewart
58	DC	Blue Beetle II	Ted Kord
59	Marvel	Machine Man	Aaron Stack
60	DC	Superman	Clark Kent
61	DC	Batman	Bruce Wayne
62	Marvel	Ant-Man I	Henry Pym
63	DC	Green Lantern	Kyle Rayner
64	DC	Ice maiden	Sigrid Nansen
65	DC	Ice	Tora Olafsdottir
66	Marvel	Hulk	Robert Bruce Banner
67	DC	Nightwing	Richard Grayson
68	DC	Big Barda	
69	DC	Orion	
70	Marvel	Spider-Woman III	Julia Carpenter
71	DC	Jayna	
72	DC	Zan	
73	DC	Elongated Man	Ralph Dibny
74	DC		Sue Dibny
75	DC	Despero	
76	Marvel	Hercules	
77	Marvel	Crystal	Crystal Maximoff
78	Marvel	Masque	
79	Marvel	The Captain	Steve Rogers
80	Marvel	Falcon	Sam Wilson
81	DC	Rocket Red #4	Dimitri Pushkin
82	DC	Rocket Red #7	Vladimir Mikoyan
83	Marvel	Nikki	
84	Marvel	Stringray	Walter Newell
85	DC	Green Lantern	G'nort Gneasmacher
86	DC		Dale Gunn
87	Marvel		Moir Brandan
88	DC	Oberon	
89	DC	Snapper Carr	Lucas Carr
90	DC		Maxwell Lord
91	DC		Catherine Cobert
92	DC	Scarlet Skier	Kirtan Rodd
93	DC	Jason Blood	
94	DC	Glenn Gammoner	
95	Marvel		Rick Jones
96	DC	Mighty Bruce	Bruce
97	Marvel	Doctor Pym	Henry Pym

98 . . DC	Doctor Light II	Kimiyo Hoshi	158 . . DC	Green Arrow II	Connor Hawke
99 . . DC	Captain Marvel	Billy Batson	159 . . DC	Maya	Chandi Gupta
100 . . Marvel	Photon	Monica Rambeau	160 . . Marvel	Two-Gun Kid	Matt Hawk
101 . . Marvel	Thor		161 . . DC	Huntress	Helena Bertinelli
102 . . DC	Firestorm	Ronnie Raymond	162 . . DC	Crimson Fox	Vivian D'Aramis
103 . . Marvel	Deathcry		163 . . DC	Crimson Fox	Constance D'Aramis
104 . . DC	Bloodwynd II		164 . . Marvel	Goliath I	Henry Pym
105 . . Marvel	Marrina	Marrina Smallwood	165 . . DC	Obsidian	Todd Rice
106 . . DC	Mister Miracle	Scott Free	166 . . Marvel	Mister Fantastic	Reed Richards
107 . . DC	Martian Manhunter	J'onn J'onzz	167 . . Marvel	Sub-Mariner	Namor McKenzie
108 . . Marvel	Starfox	Eros	168 . . DC	Aquaman	Orin
109 . . DC	Metamorpho	Rex Mason	169 . . Marvel	Moon Knight	Marc Spector
110 . . Marvel	Iron Man I	Anthony Stark	170 . . Marvel	USAgent	John Walker
111 . . DC	Fire	Beatriz daCosta	171 . . DC	Flash III	Wally West
112 . . Marvel	Yellowjacket II	Rita Demara	172 . . Marvel	She-Hulk	Jennifer Walters
113 . . Marvel	Spider-Man	Peter Parker	173 . . Marvel	Iron Man II	James Rhodes
114 . . Marvel	Starhawk I	Stakar Ogord	174 . . Marvel	Yellowjacket I	Henry Pym
115 . . DC	Wonder Woman II	Diana	175 . . Marvel	Hellcat	Patsy Walker
116 . . DC	Agent Liberty	Ben Lockwood	176 . . DC	Tasmanian Devil	Hugh Dawkins
117 . . Marvel	Doorman	Hollis Demarr	177 . . DC	Power Girl's cat	
118 . . Marvel	Jocasta		178 . . DC	Power Girl	Karen Starr
119 . . DC	Creeper	Jack Ryder	179 . . Marvel	Warbird	Carol Danvers
120 . . Marvel	Ant-Man II	Scott Lang	180 . . DC	Plastic Man	Eel O'Brian
121 . . Marvel	Big Bertha	Ashley Crawford	181 . . DC	Steel III	John Henry Irons
122 . . Marvel	Rage	Elvin Haliday	182 . . DC	Moon Maiden	Laura Klein
123 . . DC	Lobo		183 . . Marvel	Goliath II	Clint Barton
124 . . Marvel	Black Widow	Natasha Romanova	184 . . DC	Booster Gold	Michael Jon Carter
125 . . Marvel	Wasp	Janet Van Dyne	185 . . DC	Hourman III	
126 . . Marvel	Wonder Man	Simon Williams	186 . . DC	Jesse Quick	Jesse Chambers
127 . . DC	Vibe	Paco Ramone	187 . . Marvel	Whizzer	Robert Frank
128 . . Marvel	War Machine	James Rhodes	188 . . DC	Flash I	Jay Garrick
129 . . Marvel	Scarlet Witch	Wanda Maximoff	189 . . DC	Tomorrow Woman	
130 . . Marvel	Mantis		190 . . DC	Amazing Man II	Will Everett
131 . . DC	Zatanna	Zatanna Zatara	191 . . Marvel	Martinez	Martinez T'Naga
132 . . Marvel	Sersi		192 . . DC	Vixen	Mari McCabe
133 . . Marvel	Jack of Hearts	Jack Hart	193 . . Marvel	Sandman	William Baker
134 . . Marvel	Captain America	Steve Rogers	194 . . Marvel	Beast	Henry McCoy
135 . . DC	Triumph	Will McIntyre	195 . . Marvel	Swordsman I	Jacques Duquesne
136 . . DC	Wonder Woman I	Hippolyta	196 . . DC	Animal Man	Buddy Baker
137 . . DC	Multi-Man	Duncan Pramble	197 . . Marvel	Tigra	Greer Grant Nelson
138 . . Marvel	Iron Man III	Anthony Stark	198 . . Marvel	Black Knight III	Dane Whitman
139 . . Marvel	Quicksilver	Pietro Maximoff	199 . . DC	Flash IV	Walter West
140 . . DC	Hawkwoman I	Shiera Hall	200 . . Marvel	Triathlon	Delroy Garrett
141 . . DC	Ray II	Ray Terrill	201 . . DC	Blue Devil	Dan Cassidy
142 . . DC	Lightray	Sollis	202 . . DC	Antaeus	Mark Antaeus
143 . . Marvel	Mister Immortal	Craig	203 . . DC	Big Sir	Dufus Ratchet
144 . . DC	Atom II	Ray Palmer	204 . . Marvel	Invisible Woman	Susan Richards
145 . . Marvel	Flatman	Ventura	205 . . DC	Batgirl I	Barbara Gordon
146 . . DC	Green Lantern	Hal Jordan	206 . . DC	Bloodwynd I	J'onn J'onzz
147 . . DC	Black Canary II	Dinah Lance	207 . . Marvel	Thor II	Eric Masterson
148 . . Marvel	Black Panther	T'Challa	208 . . DC	Diana	
149 . . Marvel	Firestar	Angelica Jones			
150 . . DC	Oracle	Barbara Gordon			
151 . . Marvel	Giant Man I	Henry Pym			
152 . . Marvel	Gilgamesh				
153 . . DC	Flash II	Barry Allen			
154 . . Marvel	Silverclaw	Maria Santiago			
155 . . Marvel	Yondu	Yondu Udonta			
156 . . DC	Green Arrow I	Oliver Queen			
157 . . Marvel	Hawkeye	Clint Barton			

CONTRIBUTORS

HURT BUSIEK

was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1960. He began writing comics professionally in 1982, selling stories to DC and Marvel Comics in the same month, both of which came out the same day. Since then, he's written series and characters ranging from Mickey Mouse to Vampirella, including Superman, Spider-Man, Iron Man, the Avengers and more.

He is best known for the *Marvels* miniseries and for his co-creation, *ASTRO CITY*, both of which have garnered numerous industry awards, as well as runs on *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*, *Thunderbolts* (another co-creation) and a long run on Marvel's *Avengers* series with his JLA/AVENGERS partner George Pérez. He lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wife, Ann, and his two daughters. He first started writing and drawing his own JLA/Avengers clash in 1977.

GEORGE PÉREZ

started drawing at the age of five and hasn't stopped since. Born on June 9, 1954, Pérez started his professional comics career as an assistant to Rich Buckler in 1973. After establishing himself as a penciller on Marvel Comics' *Man-Wolf* and *Sons of the Tiger*, he moved on to such Marvel titles as *The Inhumans*, *Fantastic Four*, *Marvel Two-in-One* and *The Avengers*. Pérez first came to DC in 1980, where his highly detailed art style was seen in such titles as *JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA* and *FIRESTORM THE NUCLEAR MAN*.

After co-creating *NEW TEEN TITANS* with Marv Wolfman in 1980, Pérez and Wolfman collaborated again on the landmark miniseries *CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS*.

In the midst of the revamps of *BATMAN* and *SUPERMAN* that came in the wake of *CRISIS*, Pérez took on the difficult task of revitalizing *WONDER WOMAN*. As the series' writer and artist, he not only reestablished Wonder Woman as one of DC's preeminent characters, but also brought in some of the best sales the title has ever experienced.

Pérez returned to Marvel for a celebrated

three-year run on *The Avengers*, paired with writer Kurt Busiek. He later joined forces with CrossGen Comics, pencilling a number of stories for *CrossGen Chronicles* while launching the series *Solus*. Having completed one long-delayed dream assignment, George is now completing another, the 120-page *TITANS* graphic novel entitled *Games*.

TOM SMITH

Born on November 16, 1956 in the wilds of the mysterious swamps of Spotswood, New Jersey, Tom fell in love with comics at a young age. As an infant he was caught eating a handful of crayons and a few hours later had his first colorful display of art in his diaper. Years later Tom knew that more than anything else, he wanted to draw comics. After attending the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon Art, Tom began coloring promotional art for Marvel Comics. This work led to series assignments and since then he has colored almost every major Marvel character in addition to *Grimjack* and *Nexus* for other publishers. He has worked extensively with George Pérez for many years now. He makes his home in New Jersey with his wife, Rita, and children Tiffany, Christina, and Deanna.

RICHARD STARKINGS

is best known as the creator of the Comicraft studio, purveyors of unique design and fine lettering — and a copious catalogue of comic-book fonts — since 1992. He is less well known as the creator and publisher of *Hip Flask* and his semi-autobiographical cartoon strip, *Hedge Backwards*. He never seems to tire of reminding people that he lettered *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* with a pen.

